"LIGHTNING WAR" IN MANCHURIA: SOVIET MILITARY ANALYSIS OF THE 1945 FAR EAST CAMPAIGN

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This paper is based on work originally done for the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense.

--Had [the Japanese military command] studied more attentively our many offensive operations on the Western front, it could have learned the simple verity: once the Red Army attacks, it strikes a deadsure and mortal blow.

--Marshal of Artillery K. P. Kazakov (1973)

--[The Far East campaign] is a distinguished example of resolving major strategic tasks in the shortest possible time.

--Marshal of the Soviet Union M. V. Zakharov (1969)

Truth in History Books

. . . however remote in time events there recounted may seem to be, the history in reality refers to present needs and present situations wherein those events vibrate. . . . The writing of history should get beyond life as it is lived, in order to present it in the shape of knowledge. . . . Yet, the writing of history is not imagination but thought.

The Distinction Between Action and Thought

Once identified with the will, and with the aims of the will, thought would cease to be the creator of life, and by becoming tendentious, it would decay into untruth. Will and action, being no longer illumined by truth, would then be debased to passionate and pathological fury and spasm. Nothing of this kind happens because it would be against the nature of things that it should, and against the life of the spirit, which continually resists the seductions whereby practical interests try to interrupt or mislead the logic of truth. . . .

--Benedetto Croce (1938)

PREFACE

This Paper presents the initial results of a survey of Soviet military literature on the short but decisive campaign that the Soviets waged against Japanese forces in Manchuria in August 1945. Undertaken for the purpose of eliciting evidence on current Soviet precepts regarding military operations in the Far East military theater, the survey disclosed a sizeable body of literature, which includes major analytical contributions by senior figures in the Soviet high command. These works have examined in great detail the experience of planning, staging and conducting the campaign, noting not only the lessons it implies for combat operations in the Far East but also its exemplary value for the theory of modern military operations in general. Specifically, these Soviet analyses have viewed the Far East campaign as an instructive example of successful lightning war.

Little of this important material has been translated. The rare Western articles on the campaign have recapitulated its course, but the full potential of the Soviet literature for insights into modern Soviet military doctrine remains to be realized.

The present Paper is intended as a guide to the rich material discovered. It identifies the lessons that Soviet analysts infer from the campaign for possible application to modern military operations, whether in the Far East or elsewhere. Its exposition of these lessons is organized according to elements in the campaign effort, ranging from plan conceptualization to the missions of the individual forces. Additionally, the author has combined the statements and concepts contained in the Soviet literature in a hypothetical model for a strategically decisive initial phase of war.

The Paper also supplies a Bibliography of over 100 Soviet entries utilized for this survey, and an Appendix listing the major commanders of the Soviet forces in the campaign.

It should be kept in mind that this survey is based entirely on Soviet materials alone. Japanese accounts of the war greatly discount

Soviet claims regarding the intensity of the armed hostilities. A verification of the historical accuracy of the Soviet portrayal of their achievements is beyond the scope of this study. It offers the Soviet analysts' definitions of what determined the military success of the Soviet campaign in the belief that they represent valuable information regarding apparent Soviet efforts to model a similar campaign under modern conditions.

This paper was originally prepared for the Director of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, in July 1975. (It does not cover the most recent Soviet comment on the Manchurian campaign in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the end of World War II. Essentially, the recent Soviet analyses continue to elaborate the same themes as the earlier works.) The author wishes to express her gratitude for the conceptual guidance given her by the Director, Mr. Andrew W. Marshall, and for substantial contributions and criticisms from her Rand colleagues James H. Hayes and John Despres.

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

In postwar Soviet military historiography, the 1945 war against Japan occupies a distinct and anomalous place. For one, its analysis is a relatively recent phenomenon in the literature devoted to the major battles fought by the Soviets during World War II. Secondly, the campaign has been authoritatively characterized as an instructive model for modern offensive operations by virtue of its having achieved decisive outcomes in the opening phase of the war. This assessment is of a qualitatively different order than the denotations of the validity of individual operational and tactical lessons inherent in the other major battles.[1]

While the Soviet typology accurately reflects the uniqueness of their Far East campaign as the one where the Soviets planned and initiated a full-scale modern strategic offensive on their terms, it also accents the significance of the initial delay in publicly recounting the campaign and the subsequent timing of the major and copious publications devoted to its analysis.

Official references to the Far East campaign as an instructive model for modern military operations first emerged in the Soviet military press in 1960, when Sino-Soviet relations were becoming overtly hostile. However, it was not until after Khrushchev's expulsion from power in 1964, that the first comprehensive analyses were published as major works of military history. These were soon followed by more narrowly specialized works appearing with increasing frequency during the late 1960s, coincident with the mounting Soviet military buildup against China.

Hence, the initial delay and timing of Soviet publications featuring the campaign appear attributable to the deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations and an awakened Soviet military interest in offensive strategies and operations. Recent evidence indicates that this effort has carried into a larger and increasingly sophisticated doctrinal-historical preoccupation

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[1]See for instance, the comprehensive Soviet military histories of the battles of Stalingrad, Kursk, and the Caucasus, published since 1968, by A. M. Samsonov, G. A. Koltunov and B. G. Solov'ev, and Marshal A. A. Grechko, respectively.

with the "initial phase of war," in particular the strategic offensive and defensive operations of the opening phases in the different theaters of World War II.

In some Soviet military minds, the Far East campaign represents the culmination of Soviet military expertise in World War II and provides a highly relevant case history of their successful execution of a lightning war that exemplified the latest trends in military art as developed through World War II. General Shtemenko terms it "one of the biggest and most skillfully planned and executed Soviet strategic operations."[1]

The motive impulse behind the abundant literature on the campaign is not to retell history; rather, it constitutes a military-intellectual exercise that dissects and generalizes this experience as a telling achievement in the orderly and incremental development of the art of war. In doing so, it does not merely mark the imperatives of the Far East military theater; it also manifests Soviet military preferences for short and decisive campaigns and describes their concerns about the vulnerabilities inherent in such operations.

The great appeal of the Far East campaign is expressed in the professional military claims that it ranks among the most important campaigns of World War II because of the scale, dynamism, and decisiveness of its operations, and because it achieved its strategic war aims entirely within its initial phase.[2]

Over the years, Soviet definitions of the essential lessons of the campaign experience have become increasingly concrete and bold. In 1960, newly-appointed Chief of the General Staff Marshal Zakharov initially authorized the value of studying this campaign as follows:

> Attention must be given to the study of the given operations. Their study with due allowance given for the existing means of warfare will make it possible to reach a number of useful theoretical conclusions for conducting operations of the initial phase of a war also under modern conditions. . . .
>
> The execution of such a large-scale strategic offensive campaign with the forces of three fronts in great depth and at rapid tempos in a combat theater, which was exceptionally

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[1] General of the Army S. Shtemenko, "Triumph of Soviet Military Strategy," *New Times*, #18, May 1975, p. 5. General Shtemenko has been identified as the Chief of Staff of the Warsaw Pact Forces since early August 1968.

[2] L. N. Vnotchenko, *Pobeda na Dal'nem Vostoke* (Victory in the Far East), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966, pp. 266-267. Hereafter cited as *Victory in the the Far East*, 1966.

> difficult due to its natural characteristics, is an instructive example in the history of the Soviet Armed Forces.[1]

In 1966, a study edited by Defense Minister Marshal Malinovsky and co-authored by Marshal Zakharov (then Chief of General Staff) stressed the "current significance" of the campaign, claiming that regardless of the peculiarities of the theater and the poor resistance put up by the enemy, the outcome of the campaign had been determined by Soviet military might and military art, and that it was these that brought about the quick and complete defeat of the enemy.[2]

In 1967, Marshal Vasilevskii, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Far East forces during the campaign, distinguished the Far East campaign from all other Soviet campaigns in World War II because of the "current relevance of many of the military issues that educated the Soviet Armed Forces in preparing and waging the campaign." He enumerated these issues:

> . . . the enormous scope of armed combat in an extremely complex combat theater, the organization of strategic deployment to create a new combat theater, the massive regrouping of forces over great distances, the successful achievement of the surprise of powerful initial strikes, the resolute aims of the campaign and its lightning course, the organization of operational and strategic coordination during a high-speed, multi-axes offensive,

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[1] Marshal of the Soviet Union M. Zakharov, "Kampaniia Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil na Dal'nem Vostoke (The Far East Campaign of the Soviet Armed Forces), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 9, September 1960, pp. 7 and 10. Hereafter cited as Zakharov, 1960.

[2] "The concluding campaign of World War II, executed by the Soviet Armed Forces in the Far East, was a new stride in the development of Soviet military art. Many moments of the preparation and conduct of this campaign are very typical for the beginning period of a war, and therefore their experience has current significance. The peculiarity of the theater, which greatly influenced the methods of waging military actions, and also the fact that the enemy did not put up prolonged resistance to our troops, by no means lessens, but even increases the significance of this experience. For, in the final analysis, the quick defeat of the Japanese forces and the nullification of their ability to offer resistance is the result of our Armed Forces' might and the high level of Soviet military art." Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ia. Malinovsky (ed.), *Final: istoriko-memuarnyi ocherk or razgrome imperialisticheskoi Iaponii v 1945 godu* (Finale: a historical memoir on the rout of imperialist Japan in 1945), Moscow: "Nauka," 1966, p. 322. Hereafter cited as *Final*, 1966.

> the strategic command structure, the new methods of utilizing tank units, and the execution of landing operations.[1]

In 1969, after the skirmishes on the Sino-Soviet border, Marshal Zakharov reaffirmed more emphatically the relevance of the 1945 campaign:

> [The campaign] is a distinguished example of the resolution of major strategic tasks in the shortest possible time. . . .[2]

In 1971, a professional military scholar advocated incorporating the lessons of the campaign experience in current troop instruction:

> The Front and Army operations, as well as the actions by the Navy, the Flotilla, and the National Air Defense Forces are instructive as the first operations at the start of a war. In their preparation and execution were involved the troops already stationed in the Far East as well as the armies advanced from the interior. . . .
>
> The experience in preparing and executing these operations is of definite interest and can be utilized for troop training and education in modern conditions.[3]

In 1974, a book-length study on *The Initial Phase of War* by the Chief of the Military Academy of the Soviet General Staff and a team of authors purported to "disclose the general trends in preparing and conducting the initial operations that were characteristic of World War II and that have not lost their significance in the present day." This study presented a professional and systematic overview of the key aspects of German and Japanese initial operations and Allied and Soviet countermeasures as well as an analysis of the Soviet Far East campaign, asserting that:

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[1]Marshal of the Soviet Union A. Vasilevskii, "'Final'," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 6, June 1967, pp. 80-81. Hereafter cited as Vasilevskii, 1967.

[2]Marshal of the Soviet Union M. Zakharov, "Nekotorye voprosy voennogo iskusstva v sovetsko-iaponskoi voine 1945 goda (Military Art Issues in the 1945 Soviet-Japanese War)," *Voenno-istoricheskii Zhurnal*, No. 9, September 1969, p. 15. Hereafter cited as Zakharov, 1969.

[3]Col. L. N. Vnotchenko, *Pobeda na Dal'nem Vostoke*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl., Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971, p. 372. Hereafter cited as *Victory in the Far East*, 1971.

> The Soviet campaign in the Far East was a major contribution to the development of Soviet military art and, above all, to the art of preparing and delivering a crushing first strike against the enemy at the start of war. The deciding factor in realizing the swift success of the campaign was the surprise of the delivery of the first strike.[1]

Elaborating and reasserting its claim, this analysis further noted:

> In the war waged by the Soviet Union against Japan, successful solution was effected of the problem of opening a new strategic front involving the shift of the main efforts from the European theater of military operations to the Far Eastern theater, and the instructive experience of preparing and executing a crushing surprise strike at the start of hostilities was acquired. Moreover, the Far East campaign is of interest because, despite its enormous spatial scale, it was the shortest campaign of World War II with the highest outcomes (samaia rezul'tativnaia].[2]

In coupling the historical lessons to possible modern operations, the literature scrupulously abstains from reference to nuclear arms in a present-day context,[3] confining itself to the Soviet campaign waged exclusively with conventional forces. Yet, the general principles it enunciates for the conduct of such a campaign "under modern conditions" pertain as much to nuclear as to conventional combat.

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[1] Army General S. P. Ivanov (ed.), *Nachal'nyi period voiny* (The Initial Phase of War), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974, p. 299. Hereafter cited as Ivanov. This analytical work examines the theory and practice of the beginning period of war from the 19th century through World War II. The Soviet Far East campaign is discussed in Part III, "The Experience of Initial Strategic Operations." See Chapter 12, "Podgotovka i nanesenie vnezapnogo pervonachal'nogo udara s otkrytiem novogo strategicheskogo fronta (po opytu kampanii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil na Dal'nem Vostoke v 1945 g.) [The Staging and Delivery of a Surprise First Strike Upon Opening a New Strategic Front (according to the experience of the Far East Campaign of the Soviet Armed Forces in 1945)]," pp. 281-301. General Ivanov was Chief of Staff with the Far East High Command during the campaign.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 282-283. In light of the Ivanov volume's cautious assessment of the overall effectiveness of lightning war, the brazenness of its assertions regarding the "surprise crushing first strike" essence of the Manchurian campaign also suggests the possibility that such formulaic escalation may serve to lessen rather than enhance the appeal of the Manchurian "model."

[3] The single exception is a 1963 article, which describes the Transbaikal Front's experience in solving the water supply problem in the desert as instructive for operations under nuclear war conditions. Colonel-General of Engineers A. Tsirlin, "Organizatsiia vodosnabzheniia voisk Zabaikal'skogo fronta v Khingano-Mukdenskoi operatsii (Organization of the Troops' Water Supply on the Transbaikal Front during the Khingans-Mukden

The literature is doubly significant for its treatment of the peculiar military conditions in Northeast China. For the study of military operations in the Far East theater, the campaign uniquely recommends itself in that it represents

> the first example of executing a major strategic operation in the conditions of a desert-steppe and mountainous taiga [forest] combat theater.[1]

As tensions mounted along the Chinese border during the summer of 1969, Marshal Zakharov observed:

> The profound study of the experience of the Soviet-Japanese war has great significance for the strengthening of the security of the Far Eastern borders of our Homeland.[2]

Recently, another military spokesman has actually attempted to delimit the campaign's significance to the Far East theater:

> From the standpoint of military art, the significance of the Far East operations of the Soviet forces consists, above all, in that they provided the Soviet Armed Forces with the experience of organizing and executing a major offensive operation in the special conditions of the Far East military theater.[3]

Besides the late Chief of the General Staff, the authors of this literature include the late Defense Minister Marshal Malinovsky, the current Chief of Staff of the Warsaw Pact Joint Armed Forces General Shtemenko, plus a variety of other past Marshals of the Soviet Union. In 1945, these authors were intimately involved in planning and executing the final campaign of World War II, General Shtemenko in particular having been one

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Operation)," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 5, May 1963, pp. 36-48. Hereafter cited as Tsirlin. General Tsirlin was Chief of Engineering Troops on the Transbaikal Front during the campaign.

[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 270.

[2] Zakharov, 1969, p. 25.

[3] Major General of Tank Troops I. E. Krupchenko in *Sovetskie tankovye voiska 1941-1945* (Soviet Tank Forces 1941-1945), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973, p. 325.

of the three General Staff officers who designed the initial campaign plan.[1]

The high-level sponsorship of the literature and its authoritative instructions to study and assimilate pertinent lessons clearly express views at the highest levels of the Soviet military command, in particular within the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff, and their academic establishments. Services and branches have also sponsored accounts that pay special attention to the roles and missions in the campaign of their particular forces, such as the border troops (KGB), the armored and mechanized forces, especially tank forces, the Signal Corps, the Air Force, the artillery forces, and the Navy. Thus, the literature reflects both a unified, combined-arms assessment at the highest levels of command and a variety of interests and views among the individual force components.

The material provided in the literature is voluminous. For an overview of the various conceptual, operational, and tactical lessons advanced or implied by the Soviet writers, the material has been organized according to the major institutional elements of the Soviet Armed Forces for whom the particular lessons and experiences are of most immediate concern.

Thus, the discussion of the overall strategic plan of the campaign and its components is to be found in the section on the General Staff; the more detailed planning of operations is covered in the section on Fronts and Armies. This section also contains a concentrated summary of the initial actions of forces in this type of campaign and the key aspects of the preparatory and cover measures. The specific missions of individual services or branches are treated in more detail separately.

A short synopsis recapitulates the main features of the campaign, and a chronological summary depicts the thematic development of Soviet military literature on the campaign.

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[1]Vasilevskii, 1967, p. 83; Marshal of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevskii, "Delo vsei zhizni (A Lifetime Affair)," *Novyi Mir*, No. 12, December 1973, p. 158. Hereafter cited as Vasilevskii, 1973. The other two were Generals A. I. Antonov and N. A. Lomov. Shtemenko calls Marshal Vasilevskii "one of the most active planners of the war in the Far East." It must, of course, be remembered that these and other members of Soviet top military command involved in the Far East campaign had also planned and directed many of the major Soviet campaigns in the Western theater. Vasilevskii, Antonov, and Shtemenko had also served or were serving as heads of the Soviet General Staff and its Operational Division.

SYNOPSIS OF THE CAMPAIGN

The Far East campaign was preceded by a relatively short, intensive period of preparations. An outstanding feature in staging the campaign was a massive strategic transfer of troops and material from the European theater to the Far East, begun immediately upon conclusion of the war with Germany. During the months of May, June and July of 1945, the Soviets lifted four entire armies and a number of large, specialized air and ground units, together with masses of material, to the Far East, thereby doubling their forces in the theater. At the start of the offensive, the Soviet forces comprised 1,500,000 men, over 26,000 guns and mortars, 5,500 tanks and self-propelled artillery, about 3,800 aircraft, and a naval force of over 600 combat vessels and submarines and 1,500 naval aircraft.

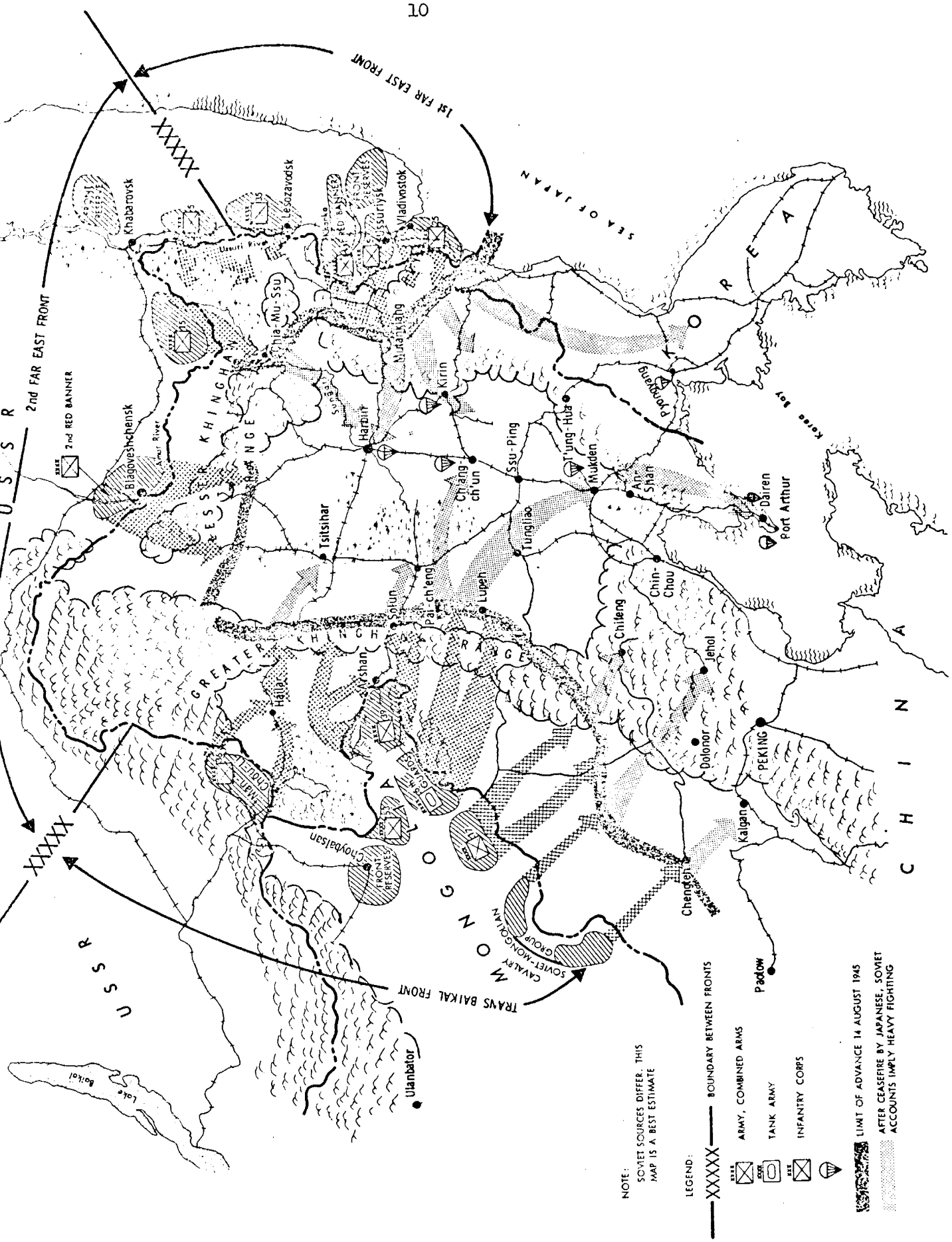
In the first hours of August 9, the three Soviet Fronts began a massive, simultaneous, combined-arms surprise offensive along the entire 5,000 km frontline that enveloped and defeated the Kwantung army within 6 days. The crucial and deepest attack was delivered from the Trans-baikal Front, based northwest of Manchuria, pouring out of Mongolia in three major axes, each of these further separated into lesser axes. Striking out toward Kalgan (northwest of Peking), Mukden, and Chang-chun these forces, consisting mainly of tanks and mechanized forces, crossed the desert, surmounted the Greater Khingan range, and converged toward the other main axis struck by the First Far Eastern Front from the northeast -- the Soviet Maritime Province -- through Japanese fortified areas and the taiga (forest) toward Kirin and Harbin. The Second Far Eastern Front, based north of Manchuria, ferried its forces across the Amur in the general areas of Blagoveshchensk and Khabarovsk and along widely separated axes with combined naval and ground forces engaged forces of the Kwantung Army in the northern sector, preventing their deployment elsewhere. The Japanese were caught completely by surprise as to the timing of the expected Soviet attack and the location of its main efforts, as well as the forces employed, in particular, the Trans-baikal Front's tank army wedge. Once the main offensive had decided the outcome of the campaign, the Soviets also executed air landings and naval landings to take key objectives in the rear.

The Soviet offensive was a combined arms operation, which involved also the participation of allied Mongolian forces. The frontline extended to over 5,000 km, with the depths of the front missions ranging from 300 to 800 km. The Soviet plan had calculated on 20-30 days to inflict a decisive defeat on the deteriorated Kwantung Army, but the Japanese capitulation came within ten days of the Soviet assault.

In the Soviet version, the surprise, strength, speed, and depth of their offensive determined the successful outcome. The technological and numerical inferiority of the Kwantung Army, its total lack of air power and anti-air defenses, the absence of Japanese minefields and anti-tank armament, which permitted the rapid and relatively unencumbered advance of the main Soviet armored and mechanized forces into Manchuria, are acknowledged only in passing. The Soviets stress, instead, their concern about being drawn into protracted fighting by the Japanese and the strategic and tactical solutions they devised to avoid this. The Soviet strategy to cut off the Kwantung Army from the other Japanese forces before it could retreat or receive reinforcements was implemented by means of powerful and highly mobile advance detachments that operated independently ahead of the main forces, overcoming provisional defenses and proceeding deep into the enemy rear to disorganize communications and command centers, while bypassing heavy defense fortifications. These openings and the ensuing confusion among enemy forces enabled prompt advance by the Soviet main forces to outflank and take the fortified regions and important objectives.

The campaign experience demonstrated that the main forces with their supplies and masses of heavy artillery invariably slowed down or completely bogged down in conditions of inhospitable terrain and lack of roads. The campaign was critically plagued by lack of fuel and adequate transport. The Soviet accounts depict very frankly the often precarious situation of the Soviet forces stranded deep within Manchuria and forced to pool fuel and supplies to form advance batallions so as to carry out the insistent instructions of the Front and theater commands to continue and accelerate the advance. At times this led to bitter differences at the field command level, but there is no latter-day condemnation of this ruthless approach.

THE SOVIET CAMPAIGN AGAINST JAPANESE FORCES IN MANCHURIA, AUGUST 1945



Soviet memoirs make it clear that in many respects the campaign was a commander's nightmare--with its far-flung and dispersed operations, lack of correct maps and intelligence on the enemy, persistent lack of basic supplies, such as fuel, water, and even food for the troops, and a troop control network of the most fragile kind. Nevertheless, the assessment remains that the concept and design of the campaign was correct; the problems encountered were due to lack of proper pre-planning of detail, insufficient preparations, and, above all, the lack of equipment suited to the uncommon challenges of the theater.

CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on the campaign has appeared in three basic forms: 1) memoirs by commanders of the Far East forces at the time; 2) accounts of the role of individual armed forces' services or branches in the campaign; and 3) comprehensive analytical histories of the entire campaign. As a whole, this material provides detailed, although one-sided, examination of the 1945 Manchurian campaign. Moreover, it illustrates both the special concerns of the individual branches and services of the Soviet Armed Forces and the peculiar experiences and style of major figures in the Soviet high command.

This section surveys chronologically the development of the Soviet literature on the Far East campaign.[1]

The Navy appears to have been the first to publish detailed volumes describing its role in the campaign. Indeed, two had already appeared by 1960 (Gel'fond, Bagrov).

The close public examination of the campaign coincides with the initial serious break in Soviet-Chinese relations, and was opened by an initiative taken by Marshal Zakharov upon his appointment under Minister of Defense Marshal Malinovsky to Chief of General Staff in 1960.[2] Shortly after the Politburo reportedly directed the General Staff to intensify its intelligence

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[1]Reference citations for the works discussed here are provided in the Bibliography. Parentheses supply the authors' names, unless these are mentioned in the text.

[2]It is probably no accident that Zakharov had previously been Marshal Malinovsky's Chief of Staff, both on the Transbaikal Front in 1945 and in the Far East Military District afterwards.

activities against China,[1] Marshal Zakharov published a seminal article that enthusiastically surveyed the Soviet Far East campaign of 1945. It decried the lack of attention to the lessons that this campaign offered in organizing and waging military actions in the Far East, lessons that "remain meaningful also for modern conditions." Pointing to the general doctrinal value of the campaign experience, Zakharov recommended particular study of the following aspects: 1) the operations of the different Fronts in their diversity to define theoretical concepts for the beginning phase of war under modern conditions; 2) the experience of multiple and independent axes of attack as being valuable for military theory and staff and troop training; 3) the study as well as the introduction in practice of the advance detachment concept originally and successfully employed in the '45 campaign; and 4) the successful attainment of surprise.

It was not until several years after Zakharov's recommendation that the first few studies appeared, including an account of the campaign in the official *Istoriia Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza 1941-1945* (History of the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union 1941-1945). In 1962 and 1963 the first detailed accounts of the campaign experience on the Transbaikal Front were published: one described the VI Guards Tank Army's advance across the Greater Khingans and the Gobi desert (Krupchenko); another dealt with the solution of the water supply problem, recommending the experience as instructive for nuclear war conditions (Tsirlin).

The active period of publication did not begin until 1965, continuing through the following years and coinciding with the initial years of the major new buildup against China. It was then that the 1945 campaign was first publicly analyzed in a systematic manner, and the lessons for military art were spelled out in general terms.

In 1965, General Pliev published a book of his memoirs on the campaign of the joint Soviet-Mongol force on the Kalgan (Peking) axis of the Transbaikal Front. In the same year General Liudnikov, Commander of the 39th Army on the Solun-Chang-chun axis on the left flank of VI Guards Tank

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[1] Oleg Penkovskiy, *The Penkovskiy Papers*, New York: Doubleday, 1965, p. 73.

Army, published his account in a military journal. There appeared also a major article analyzing the new and important role of the border guards in the 1945 offensive (Platonov and Bulatov), an account of the South Sakhalin invasion (D'iakonov), and a summary article on the entire campaign, providing statistics on the forces and arms employed by both sides (*Kampaniia Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil na Dal'nem Vostoke v 1945g*).

In 1966, two important and comprehensive histories of the '45 campaign were published. One, *Final*, a politico-military account, had as its chief authors Defense Minister Marshal Malinovsky and Chief of General Staff Marshal Zakharov; the other, *Pobeda na Dal'nem Vostoke* (Victory in the Far East) by L. N. Vnotchenko was put out by the Military Publishing House (Voenizdat) for the use of officers, generals and admirals of the Soviet Armed Forces and represents the systematic, military-professional examination of the campaign. Both volumes were subsequently reissued in revised and enlarged editions--*Final* in 1969, *Victory in the Far East* in 1971--with heightened accent on the present day significance of the 1945 Far East experience. These are very thorough, meticulously researched works that describe and evaluate the components and merits of the strategic design, the preparations and cover measures, as well as the role, the successes, and the problems of individual branches of the Armed Forces participating in the campaign. They take explicit note of the application of certain precepts under modern conditions.

In 1966, the offensive of the First Far Eastern Front, which had breached heavily fortified areas and advanced through mountainous, densely forested taiga, was featured in the periodical publication of reminiscences by its Commander Marshal Meretskov.

More major contributions appeared in 1967: the book by Army Commander General Liudnikov of the Transbaikal Front, a work replete with practical pointers for staging operations similar to those on the Transbaikal Front, and a volume on the VI Guards Tank Army (Zavizion and Korniushin). Also, a serialization of General Shtemenko's memoirs, focusing on the General Staff's deliberations in planning the campaign; a lengthy article on the experience and lessons for the Signal Corps by its Far Eastern deputy chief at the time (Kurochkin); discursive reviews of *Final* and *Victory in the Far East* by Marshals Vasilevskii and Meretskov, in which they underlined

the timely value of the works and contributed their definitions of the cardinal ingredients of the campaign's success. The remarks by Vasilevskii have already been noted (p. 3 above). Marshal Meretskov had fulsome praise for the military-professional value of *Victory in the Far East*. Meretskov noted that "correct" attention had been given to such elements of military art characterizing the Far East campaign as:

> the secrecy of troop concentration, the deployment of force groupings in the absence of roads, the surprise assumption of offensive, the destructiveness of the initial strike, the extensive use of tank and mechanized corps units in the first echelon, rapid attack along widely separated strikelines, and high dynamism of actions.

He decried the lack of a more detailed description of the theater's locale features, which are more problematic than any encountered on the Western front. He stressed the importance of the experience of regrouping large Soviet forces from the Western theater to the Far East, which he termed unprecedented in history, and regretted the absence of detail on its implementation.

In 1968, there was a remarkable proliferation of books on the various services and branches during World War II, all of them devoting separate chapters to the Far East campaign. The memoirs of General Shtemenko and Marshal Meretskov were published in book form. The anniversaries of the Lake Khasan and Khalkhin Gol engagements of 1938 and 1939 received special note in 1968 and 1969. The fortieth anniversary of the 1929 clashes with the Chinese in Manchuria was ostentatiously celebrated by General Tolubko in an article published shortly after his appointment as Far Eastern Military District Commander following the Ussuri river incidents in March. An enlarged edition of *Final* appeared soon thereafter with the authors' pointed claim that the new edition was guided by the instructiveness of the operations waged in the Far East, the experience of which had not lost its meaning even in the present day. The second edition added discussions of the alternate strategic plans considered but rejected by the Soviet High Command in 1945; the instituting of the Far East Commander-in-Chief link; the naval landing operations in North Korea; the logistics problems plaguing the VI Guards Tank Army; and the demands and difficulties encountered by the medical corps.

In 1969 Marshal Zakharov published an article on the campaign's solutions to major "problems of military art little examined in the press," such as cover of troop concentration and deployment and the attainment of surprise, and defined the campaign as "a distinguished example of resolving major strategic tasks in the shortest possible time."

In 1970, in another major article, Marshal Zakharov urged thorough study of the limited conflicts at Lake Khasan (1938) and Khalkhin Gol (1939) as being "extremely instructive for the present." Marshal Vasilevskii published a two-part article on the 25th anniversary of the Far East campaign in which he described the planning of the campaign and its operations and discussed a number of specific factors ensuring the success of the campaign. In 1971, an enlarged second edition of *Victory in the Far East* appeared, with more extensive discussion of the preparations, the secrecy and camouflage measures, and the peculiar features of force formations at each of the three Fronts of the campaign.

Since 1972, the Far East campaign has been recounted in the memoirs of Marshal Vasilevskii and other commanders. The contributions of the artillery forces were described in the revised edition of Artillery Marshal Kazakov's memoirs in 1973. In 1974, an article examined the tactics and performance of tank forces in the mountainous taiga locale of the First Far Eastern Front (Ezhakov). In the same year, a book-length analysis of the opening campaigns in World War II, edited by Army General S. P. Ivanov, chief of the General Staff Academy, presented the Soviet Far East campaign as the model case of a surprise first-strike offensive staged largely with forces transferred to a newly-opened strategic theater. The bulk of the volume, however, critically analyzed the lightning campaigns of the Axis powers at the start of World War II and the counterstrategies of the Allied powers.

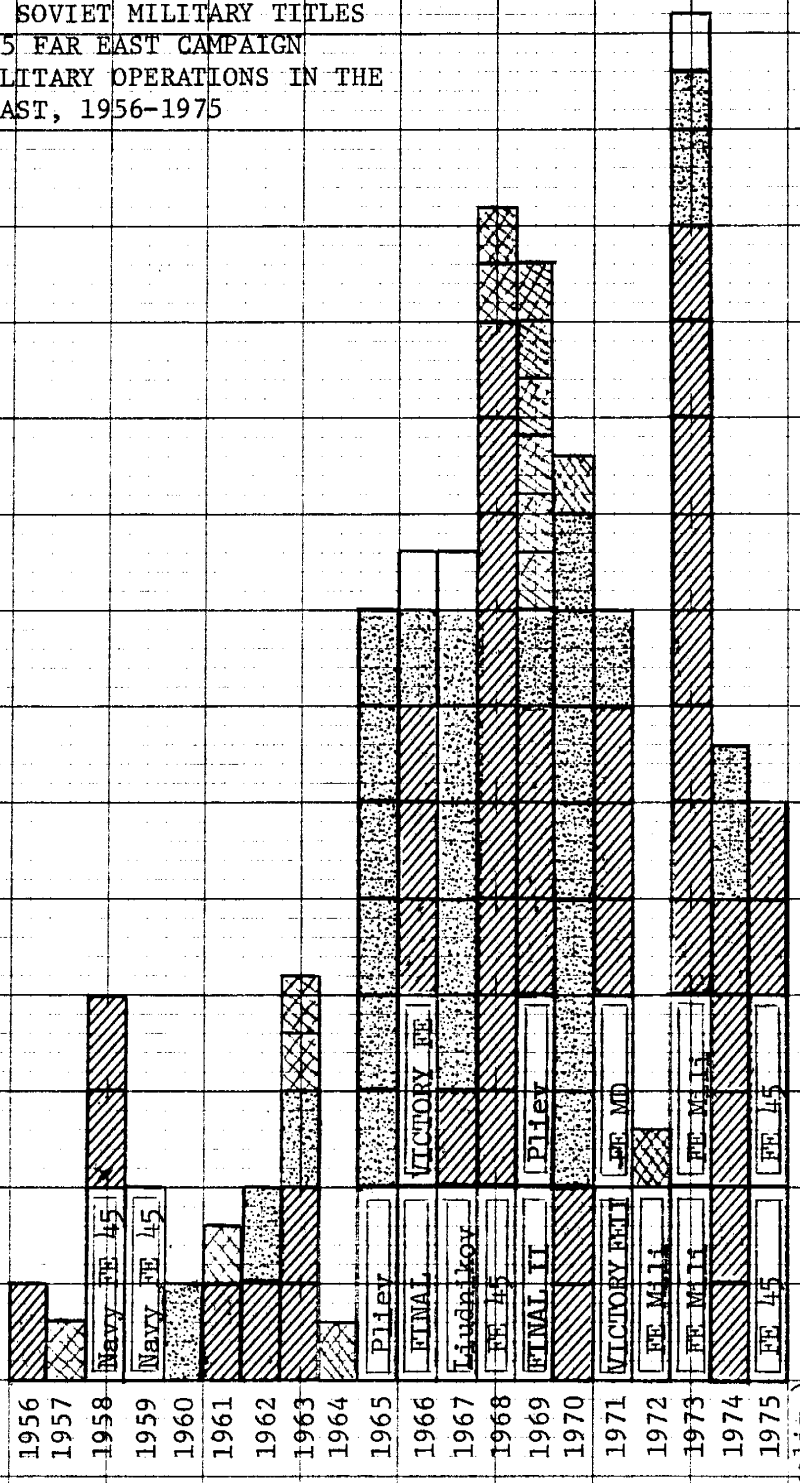
Also, since 1968 the Khabarovsk Publishing House has issued a number of military-patriotic anthologies on Far East wars which contain contributions by Marshals Malinovsky, Zakharov, Vasilevskii, Zhukov, and others.

Two major books are scheduled for publishing in 1975: one on the First Far Eastern Front by the Commander of the 25th Army (Chistiakov), whose forces staged joint actions with the Pacific Navy and successfully employed tank brigades to breach heavy fortifications; the other on the

entire campaign, one of its authors having served as the Military Council member of the Far East High Command in 1945 (Shikin and Sapozhnikov).

The accompanying chart depicts graphically the incidence of the literature between 1956 and 1975. It is based on the Soviet works located in this survey. (The survey was concluded in June 1975 and hence does not include the numerous recent articles on the campaign that appeared on the 30th anniversary of the end of World War II.)

INCIDENCE OF SOVIET MILITARY TITLES ON THE 1945 FAR EAST CAMPAIGN AND PRIOR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE FAR EAST, 1956-1975



Identif. Book on 1945 Far East campaign and/or Far East military

Chapter on 1945 campaign in a book

Article on 1945 campaign

Major reference to 1945 campaign in an article

Standard review of book on 1945 campaign

Titles on 1929, Lake Khasan, Khalkhin-Gol clashes

II. THE GENERAL STAFF AND COMMAND IN THE THEATER

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING: GENERAL STAFF[1]

This chapter presents the key elements of the grand design of the campaign as defined in the Soviet literature. In the current view of Soviet military planners, the Far East campaign was the first Soviet opportunity to plan and execute a full-scale strategic offensive, where they were free to choose the time, scope and type of military operations.[2] Their close scrutiny of the campaign over the last decade is clearly motivated by a keen interest in identifying those principles embodied in its design and execution that are of theoretical value for military strategies designed to secure strategically decisive results during a short, initial phase of a war. Accordingly, Soviet inquiry into the campaign only cursorily acknowledges the weakness of the enemy force at the time and focuses instead on the features of the Soviet plan that are deemed to have ensured the success of the Soviet offensive.

The Soviet campaign plan was designed to effect a quick, fatal paralysis of the enemy's military capability at the very start of the war, thus precluding the staging of all effective resistance. The following strategic principles are deemed the basic determinants of the Soviet success: achievement of surprise by cover of preparations and unexpected tactics; several coordinated fronts to encircle and dismember the main enemy forces; simultaneous delivery of powerful initial strikes; full exploitation of surprise by dynamic advance and retention of initiative; integrated use of combined arms; and prewar deployment of a superior and fully sufficient force in the theater.

Criteria in Choosing Strategic Targets

The campaign plan was based on a thorough evaluation of the strategic targets, seeking to utilize maximally both the prevailing Soviet geographical

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[1]The memoirs of Marshals Shtemenko, Meretskov, and Vasilevskii, the comprehensive histories *Final* and *Victory in the Far East*, and the articles by Marshal Zakharov provide the most useful accounts of the campaign's strategic planning.

[2]*Final*, 1969, p. 65.

and military advantages and the critical vulnerabilities of Japanese military deployments and capabilities in order to achieve victory "in the shortest time possible."

Except for occasional political allegations, such as one author's remark that if the Soviets had not come through and captured Port Arthur and Dairen, Manchuria would have fallen into the hands of U.S. Marines and Chiang Kai-shek's troops and become an American military base,[1] the strategic rationale most often cited is that the Kwantung Army in Manchuria was selected as the main target because it constituted a vital link in the enemy's military capability. The Kwantung Army was the most compact and formidable Japanese force on the Asian mainland, it was accessible to a massed Soviet force, and its destruction was calculated to bring about Japan's capitulation. General Shtemenko as well as the 1969 edition of *Final* claim that other alternatives were considered, but rejected by the Soviet General Staff as unpromising for the goal of quick victory.[2]

The reported evaluation of these alternatives sheds light on Soviet calculations of military-strategic opportunities. According to *Final*, the first alternative considered was the invasion of the Japanese metropolis proper with its key political, economic, and military centers. "The idea

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[1]Col.-Gen. I. I. Liudnikov, *Cherez Bol'shoi Khingan* (Across the Greater Khingans), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1967, p. 109. Hereafter cited as Liudnikov. Marshal Meretskov also alludes to Western desires to see Manchuria "liberated by none other than the Anglo-U.S. forces." See Marshal K. A. Meretskov, *Serving the People*, translated from the Russian, Moscow: Progress, 1971, p. 342. Hereafter cited as Meretskov.

[2]Marshal of the Soviet Union M. V. Zakharov (ed.), *Final: istoriko-memuarnyi ocherk o razgrome imperialisticheskoi Iaponii v 1945 godu* (The Finale: a historical memoir on the rout of imperialist Japan in 1945), 2nd ed., rev. and enl., Moscow: "Nauka," 1969, pp. 66-68, 103. Hereafter cited as *Final*, 1969. See also Army General S. M. Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War, 1941-1945*, translated from the Russian, Moscow: Progress, 1970, pp. 329-333. Hereafter cited as Shtemenko. Shtemenko asserts that "first the General Staff, and then GHQ, became dedicated to this idea [striking the Kwantung Army] and ultimately it formed the basis of our war plan" (p. 329).

of a landing operation was tempting." It was rejected for the following reasons:

- o Japan's home territory held the strongest force grouping, and a strategic landing operation here would entail "very great difficulties."
- o Allied forces were still too far from the Japanese metropolis to render assistance, hence the operation was not likely to be decisively consummated.
- o The landing invasion would "inevitably entail great losses."

The second alternative considered was to deliver the main Soviet strike against Japanese force groupings in North China. Such action was deemed not promising because:

- o Japanese forces here were not concentrated in compact groupings but were spread out over a wide territory.
- o Soviet advance against these forces was possible only along the axis of Kalgan (Changkiakow [NW of Peking]), which presented difficulty with accessibility because of its terrain characteristics, restricting operational zone capacity.

The criterion of striking key forces also ruled out the variant of a strategic main strike against Southern Sakhalin and the Kuriles, because the Japanese forces there were relatively weak.[1]

The axes of the main efforts in Manchuria were directed toward taking enemy command and military centers and cutting his ground communications. Several accounts offer revealing considerations regarding the peculiarities of the Kalgan-Peking axis. General Shtemenko reports that it was rejected as the axis for the main effort from Mongolia for the reason that it did not contain any enemy forces of significance, and, thus, held out only the prospect of a futile struggle with natural elements.[2] According to *Final*, the Kalgan-Peking line "tempted" the command of the Transbaikal Front, as they

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[1]This entire discussion of the strategic alternatives is taken from *Final*, 1969, pp. 66-68.

[2]Shtemenko, p. 334.

were searching for the best axis for their main effort to bring them in the shortest time out to the Liaotung peninsula and the Yellow Sea.[1] Although, in their opinion, the natural terrain of this axis permitted a "relatively strong grouping of Soviet mobile forces," the desert locality and absence of railroads presented a most serious problem in the resupply of the advancing Soviet forces. The main axis of the front came to be directed toward Solun, instead. The latest edition of *Victory in the Far East* hints openly at the preferability of the Kalgan-Peking axis. This text transgresses even against Soviet own historical truth in order to assert that the Transbaikal Front forces "advanced out to the Yellow Sea coastline along the shortest axis (from the territory of MPR to Kalgan [Chiangkiakow] and Peking)," thus executing in an "extremely short period of time" their mission to isolate Manchuria from Japanese reserves in North China.[2] In reality, it was the forces on the Solun-Mukden axis who reached the Yellow Sea.

Basic Design of Campaign

The contemporary Soviet assessment is that the campaign plan was both distinguished and correct.[3] According to Marshal Zakharov,

> The strategic operation to defeat the Kwantung Army is of interest both for its concept and for the methods of executing the tasks set by the Supreme High Command.[4]
>
> [The campaign] is a distinguished example of resolving major strategic tasks in the shortest possible time, based on a profound and all-sided calculation of the potentials of the [opposing] sides.[5]

Victory in the Far East notes that

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[1] *Final*, 1969, p. 103.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 314. The forces in the *auxiliary* Kalgan axis bogged down in the desert expanses around Kalgan and Zhekhe and never came near the Yellow Sea or, for that matter, Peking.

[3] Meretskov, p. 342; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 312.

[4] Zakharov, 1960, p. 10.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1969, p. 15.

> . . . in the war against imperialist Japan the Soviet Armed Forces acquired the experience of preparing a major operation designed to seize strategic initiative, the experience of rapidly relocating a part of the country's armed forces over a great distance, and of organizing the cooperation of the ground forces with the Navy.[1]

According to *Final*,

> In defining the general design of the strategic operation of Soviet forces in the Far East, the most important role, one may say the decisive role, belonged to the time factor.[2]

Recent Soviet analysis explicitly denotes the campaign as a "truly lightning war," in which the surprise of the initial strike was the decisive factor ensuring the rapid success of the offensive.[3] In a less outspoken manner, the critical role of surprise for early victory has been acknowledged in earlier Soviet analyses and coupled with that of "crushing first strike":

> The most important feature of the Soviet-Japanese war is that the strategic aims of the war were attained in the course of its initial phase. Therefore, the strategic offensive operation in Manchuria as an invasion operation possesses a number of characteristics typical of the initial phase of a war: secret concentration and deployment of force groupings; surprise assumption of the offensive at night and with a crushing first strike, employing maximum forces and arms in the first echelon.[4]

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 267.

[2] *Final*, 1969, p. 82. An offensive plan that would crush the Japanese military capability in the shortest possible time was mandated by the original Stavka instruction to the General Staff (Shtemenko, p. 328). *Final*, 1969, pp. 82-84 describes how the General Staff planners sought to concretely implement the time imperative in their selection of the axes and forces of the campaign. It also comments on the irony of history: "In essence, the question revolved around a plan for a truly lightning defeat of the opposing enemy. As circumstances would have it, the Soviet Armed Forces had to put in practice the very kind of a 'lightning operation,' to the description of which vaunted German military theoreticians in their time devoted a multitude of their works to no particular avail."

[3] Ivanov, p. 299. See also p. 5 above.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 267; Zakharov 1969, p. 15. In his 1960 article recommending the current significance of the Far East campaign, Marshal Zakharov had already noted the effective Soviet attainment of surprise.

The particular design of the campaign as an *encirclement* operation that employed lightning war tactics is also deemed an essential factor in assuring a quick outcome of the war. The plan's strategy of encirclement included auxiliary strikes that split up the encircled main enemy force grouping and afforded simultaneous cut-off of the enemy forces from their strategic reserves and denial of cooperation among their forces within the encircled sector.[1]

Thus, *Victory in the Far East* asserts that "the axes of the main attacks of the fronts were chosen exceptionally expediently," based primarily on the strategy of encirclement but embodying also other considerations, such as the natural advantages offered by the Soviet-Mongolian border configuration, the location of enemy fortified areas, his force dispositions and technological capabilities, his lack of transport network for reserves' maneuver, etc.[2]

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[1] *Final*, 1969, p. 82, reports that the initial Soviet concept was to deliver a number of cleaving and crushing strikes against the Kwantung Army. Realizing that this left the Japanese with the option to retreat to the ports and evacuate to the metropolis, "which inevitably would have resulted in protracted military actions," the planners reached the decision to encircle the main Kwantung Army forces while simultaneously dividing them, i.e., to stage a "strategic 'Cannae'." (In the battle of Cannae in 216 B.C., Hannibal encircled and demolished the Roman army. According to the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia*, "bourgeois military theoreticians," like Schliefen and Moltke regarded this battle as the culminating example of military art. Their followers, however, were always unsuccessful in trying to implement this strategy. It was not until the Soviet army staged its major battles during World War II, like Stalingrad, that this strategy is alleged to have been successfully executed on a grand scale in modern warfare.)

The following statement in Ivanov, p. 225, *if* read in this context and given the benefit of doubt, would appear to be grossly discordant: "The 'idée fixe' of the Hitlerite military leadership was the striving to stage a 'new Cannae' on the strategic and operational level, i.e., the striving to develop the offensive by calculating on encirclement and annihilation of the enemy's major groupings." This statement, of course, appears in a discussion of novel features in German opening operations.

For the comment on the 1945 strategic plan, see Zakharov, 1960, pp. 10-12, for an authoritative outline of the central meritorious features of the plan. *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 268-270 (1971, pp. 312-316) offers the best systematic review of the central features of the campaign plan. Another recapitulation is provided in *Final*, 1969, pp. 356-358, which leads off with the observation that the most interesting plan aspect is that the campaign was a "preplanned system of major operations with the participation of all branches of the armed forces."

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 268. While reiterating the doctrinal sanctity of "encirclement," this account as well as those of

Advancing to the flanks and rears of the Kwantung Army, the principal attacks of the Soviet fronts cut off its contact with the metropolis and strategic reserves located in North China. The Soviet secondary attacks pinned down individual Japanese force groupings, forced the Japanese to defend along the entire border and prevented them from organizing effective resistance against any one of the Soviet axes. This strategy ensured meeting the time imperative. It relied on a highly dispersed Soviet force deployment (the concentrations of the Soviet forces in the three main strike sectors occupied only seven percent of the entire 5,000 km front-line), whereby within the first 4-6 days of the campaign the Soviet fronts

> *not only* brought their main forces into the flanks and rear of the main grouping of the Kwantung Army, but *also dismembered* it and eliminated cooperation between Japanese fronts and between armies within these fronts. *Therefore*, during the following 3-4 days the exploitation of the success attained by the Soviet forces resulted in the complete defeat of the enemy's strategic grouping, the capitulation of the Kwantung Army, and the capture of the vital centers on enemy territory.[1]

Zakharov notes that

> *An offensive along separate axes is characteristic of modern military actions.* The study of this problem according to the experience of the Manchurian operation can provide useful material for modern military theory and the combat training of the troops.

He also points out that, in contrast to the experience on the German Front, where the aims of major strategic Front offensives were attained by means of a number of successive operations,

> in Manchuria, the Fronts carried out single operations, the depths of which coincided with the depth of the strategic operation.[2]

Marshal Zakharov, most notably, also note that the advantageous border configuration was a major factor in the applicability of this strategy under the circumstances.

[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 269-270. Emphasis supplied.

[2] Zakharov, 1960, pp. 11-12. Emphasis supplied.

Force Selection

The successful realization of the strategic plan was made possible by deploying "carefully thought-out force groupings" along the different axes. Uniformity of deployments was rejected outright, and the force composition for each front was decided on the basis of the specific characteristics of the terrain on which it was deployed and on its assigned missions.[1] The literature notes the exacting combinations of the different forces at each location, and stresses the combined-arms nature of these deployments. In the present professional Soviet military judgment,

> The experience of the operation fully proved the feasibility of actions by large masses of tanks, aircraft, and artillery in the complex and difficult conditions of the Far East combat theater.[2]

The basic determination of the types of forces to be employed was made by the General Staff as it drew up the initial plans for the main efforts of the campaign. More concrete decisions on force formations and rates of advance were made in consultation with Front commanders, who had incognito inspected the forces and the conditions in the theater and provided important inputs to the general campaign plan before it was approved in final form.[3]

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 269.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[3] In light of the fact that the number of people involved in planning the campaign was very small, it is interesting to note the following admonishment by Marshal Vasilevskii: "The 1945 military campaign in the Far East, as no other during the last war, convincingly demonstrated that the development of strategic concepts and plans is not the prerogative of individual persons, no matter how high the position that they occupy, but rather the result of intensive creative activity of a large collective: the Supreme High Command, the General Staff, the top echelons of the different armed services, the central boards of the [Ministry] of Defense and Rear Services of the Red Army, the command and staffs of the Fronts, the Navy and the Armies" (Vasilevskii, 1967, p. 80).

Estimating the needed quantity of forces was another "major problem of strategic import."[1] Its importance is underscored by attributing the achievement of decisive results in an "extremely short period of time" to the fact that the Soviets had deployed and readied in the Far East a force grouping that "fully guaranteed fulfillment of the tasks of the strategic operation."[2] *Final* lists the statistics on forces and materiel deployed in the Far East at the start of the offensive and observes:

> These data show that while having a relatively small superiority in men, the Soviet troops were significantly superior to the opponent in combat technology, which was one of the important prerequisites for the quick breach of Japanese border fortifications and the rapid development of the offensive of the Soviet troops into the depth of Manchuria.[3]

A volume edited by Marshal Grechko lists the ratios of Soviet to Japanese forces as follows:

Men (Soviet and Mongolian)	1.1:1	(the 1974 edition changes this to read "almost" 2:1)
Weapons	4.0:1	
Tanks and self-propelled artillery	7.0:1	
Aircraft	2.5:1	

It observes that

> in this manner, the Soviet force grouping . . . comprised forces and means sufficient to deliver powerful crushing strikes against the enemy and to end the war successfully.[4]

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[1] *Final*, 1969, p. 358.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 270.

[3] *Final*, 1969, p. 96

[4] Marshal A. A. Grechko (ed.), *Osvoboditel'naia missiia Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil vo vtoroi mirovoi voine* (The Liberating Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in World War II), *Politizdat*, Moscow, 1971, p. 437; 2nd ed., 1974, p. 422.

In 1945, "the General Staff reached the correct conclusion" that the standing Soviet Far East force of 40 ground divisions and other forces was insufficient for the aims of an offensive campaign.[1] The solution was found in a massive strategic transfer of forces and equipment from the Western theater, which doubled the existing Far East capability. Four entire armies and a large number of special units, altogether totalling about 750,000 men with their equipment, were moved to the Far East on the Transsiberian railway during May-July 1945. Pointing out that in scope the transfer was unprecedented in military history, Soviet sources assert that the requirement of rapid and undetected transfer and deployment of the massive reinforcements was successfully met. The experience is denoted as "highly instructive," but the literature fails to provide elaboration on the implementation of the transfer.[2]

The forces to be transferred were selected carefully on the basis of their excellence in the Western theater in operations analogous to those planned along the Far East campaign axes to which they were to be deployed.

The transfer also involved moving entire commands from the West in order to reinforce the Far East command cadre with "battle-seasoned commanders."[3]

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[1] *Final*, 1969, p. 358.

[2] Colonel K. Kuznetsov, "O strategishceskikh peregruppirovkakh (Strategic Regroupings)," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 12, December 1973, pp. 15-16. *Final*, 1969, pp. 358-359 attributes the success of the transfer to the "remarkable planning of the transfer" by the General Staff and military communications organs and to the "exceptionally well-organized and self-less" effort by the railroad service. This account also succinctly conveys the massive and dynamic character of the entire transfer and regrouping effort that was implemented prior to the offensive: "In all, during May-July of 1945, along the communications arteries of Siberia, Transbaikal, and the Far East, up to a million Soviet troops were on trains, in loading (pod pogruzkoi), and on march in the deployment areas" (p. 94).

[3] For specifics on the forces and commands transferred, see Shtemenko, pp. 327-328; Meretskov, p. 330; *Final*, 1969, p. 90. Marshal Meretskov and his staff of the former Karelian Front arrived in the Far East in early April 1945; General Purkaev, who was to command the Second Far Eastern Front, had been the Far Eastern Front commander since 1943; but Marshal Malinovsky apparently did not arrive in the Far East before July 1945. The theater commander-in-chief Marshal Vasilevskii is not reported as having arrived in the theater before July 5. The commander-in-chief of the Air Force A. A. Novikov may have also arrived around this time, but the commander-in-chief of the Navy N. G. Kuznetsov was urgently called out by Vasilevskii on August 3 (see also below, p. 40).

Role and Means of Surprise[1]

Surprise was the element that would enable the Soviets to seize initiative and assure the planned development of the campaign. The timing, the form, and the scope of Soviet operations were all elements of strategic surprise. General Shtemenko in his memoirs, in particular, focuses on how Japanese vulnerabilities and miscalculations were utilized to achieve strategic surprise, despite the fact that

> Our [Soviet] efforts to achieve surprise were much hindered by the fact that the Japanese had for long been convinced of the inevitability of war with the Soviet Union.

Yet, the fact that the Germans had launched a successful surprise attack on the Soviet Union in the same situation, reinforced the General Staff's determination to plan for surprise as an ingredient of their plan.[2]

One element of surprise consisted of foiling Japanese calculations. General Liudnikov asserts that setting the main effort at the Transbaikal Front and crossing the Greater Khingan range with masses of armor and mechanized forces bore out Suvorov's principle that to ensure success, one must do that which the enemy considers impossible.[3] The Soviets were fully aware of the Japanese failure to anticipate or plan for a serious Soviet attack in this sector covered by the natural barrier of a 3000 to 4000 foot high mountain range.

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[1]See V. Bogomolov, "V avguste sorok chetvertogo . . . (In August 1944 . . .)," *Novyi mir*, No. 11, November 1974, pp. 34-35 for a precise formulation of the three-fold effect of successful surprise: 1) it catches the enemy unprepared for retaliation; 2) it deprives the enemy of initiative; and, 3) it destroys the morale of enemy troops and command. See also Ivanov, chapter 12, pp. 281-301, which presents the campaign as a successful World War II prototype of a surprise first strike campaign involving the opening of a new strategic front, and notes that "the deciding factor in realizing the swift success of the campaign was the surprise of the delivery of the first strike" (p. 299).

[2]Shtemenko, pp. 335-336.

[3]Liudnikov, p. 91.

Marshal Meretskov notes that "Tokyo staked on" a Soviet strategy that would attempt to "squeeze" the Kwantung Army, thus affording it time to organize defenses and a gradual withdrawal. The Soviets, in turn, correctly calculated that a "swift rout . . . would upset these plans."[1]

The rapid offensive featuring massed armor was also calculated to take advantage of the fact that Japan's war-fighting experience had accustomed them to relatively slow enemy advance and did not include encounters with massed tank attacks. The timing of the Soviet offensive utilized Japanese expectations that a Soviet offensive was not likely during the heavy rain period, and that it would be delayed by the constraints imposed on Soviet supply transports due to the existence of only the single Transsiberian rail line. In fact, the Soviet offensive caught the Kwantung Army in the midst of regrouping its forces according to new defensive operations plans.[2]

Exceeding the Japanese expectations regarding the strength of a Soviet attack is considered another element of surprise. One Soviet account describes it as preparing a hurricane, when the Japanese expected a storm;[3] another derides Japanese intelligence for having failed to read the lesson of Soviet war-fighting style, whereby "once the Red Army attacks, it strikes a deadsure and mortal blow."[4]

Shtemenko notes that surprise and catching the Japanese off their guard depended mainly on how well the preparations of the Soviet forces were kept secret.

> For this purpose a special system of regrouping was worked out and strictly observed. No one, of course, was told the date of the start of operations. Surprise also depended on an unusual logistical approach.[5]

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[1]Meretskov, p. 342.

[2]Zakharov, 1960, pp. 14-15, notes: "This was the most advantageous time to strike. The enemy was caught in disarray." See also A. A. Strokov (ed.), *Istoriia voennogo iskusstva* (History of Military Art), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966, p. 514.

[3]*Final*, 1969, p. 82.

[4]Artillery Marshal K. P. Kazakov, *Vsegda s pekhotoi, vsegda s tankami* (Always with the Infantry, Always with the Tanks), 2nd ed., rev. and enl., Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973, p. 256.

[5]Shtemenko, p. 336.

> Besides strategic surprise, we . . . tried to make use of every possible means of operational and tactical suddenness, particularly attacks without artillery preparation and night operations.[1]

> The operations of the Fronts and armies were mounted on the principle of a surprise attack with throwing large forces into action.[2]

Final credits Soviet cover measures with attaining surprise:

> **The concealment measures observed by our forces achieved surprise, which on the whole on the scale of the entire campaign was of strategic value.**[3]

In the authors' view, "surprise is the harbinger of victory,"[4] and ensuring the secrecy of all preparatory measures retains its timely interest.[5] The latest edition of *Victory in the Far East* provides extensive discussion of cover and deception measures and their practical applicability in contemporary operations, thus lending particular emphasis to this aspect of surprise. It notes the successfully camouflaged converting of border defense positions into offensive start sites and the secret deployment there of Front and army strike groupings, and concludes that "thereby it is possible to attain complete surprise in executing the first operations at the beginning of the war.... Aspects of this experience can be of practical interest for planning modern operations."[6]

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[1] Shtemenko, p. 338. The launch of the offensive on the First Far Eastern Front exemplifies these principles best. Additionally, the surprise night attack here took place in a heavy downpour of rain. A military college text, prepared under the editorship of Marshal Bagramian, notes among the military art lessons of the campaign "the utilization of nighttime and unfavorable meteorological and natural conditions for achieving surprise." Marshal of the Soviet Union I. Kh. Bagramian (Editor-in-Chief), *Voennaia istoriia* (Military History), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971, p. 273. Hereafter cited as Bagramian.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 274.

[3] *Final*, 1966, p. 274.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 363.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 359.

[6] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 82-83.

Conduct of the Campaign

According to Marshal Zakharov,

> The execution of such a large-scale strategic offensive campaign with the forces of three Fronts in great depth and at rapid tempos in a military theater, which was exceptionally difficult due to its natural characteristics, is an instructive example in the history of the Soviet Armed Forces.[1]

The campaign was designed to be an intensive, high-speed offensive that retained combat initiative in Soviet hands throughout the entire operation. *Victory in the Far East* offers the following characterization and rationale:

> . . . in the war against imperialist Japan the Soviet Armed Forces acquired the experience of preparing a major operation designed to seize strategic initiative. . . .
>
> The design of the strategic operation was characterized by decisiveness of actions, calculated to conclude the entire campaign quickly. The Stavka decision to deliver two powerful strikes along converging axes to encircle the main forces of the Kwantung Army fully justified itself. The offensive plan envisaged great activity and calculated to retain the initiative in the hands of the Soviet command throughout the entire operation. . . .
>
> Under the pressure of our troops, the Japanese command was unable to organize defense in its operational depth, nor did it have time to organize and execute counterstrikes against our troops wedging deeply into the territory of Manchuria.[2]

At the start of the offensive, the amassed Soviet forces were unleashed *simultaneously* on the several Fronts.

> This was to have eliminated the opportunity for the enemy to maneuver his reserves or to deploy them compactly for counteracting the offensive of the Soviet troops. . . .
>
> Thus, from the very beginning, the enemy defense was subjected to powerful attack along an enormous front. Not only was the enemy pinned down along the entire length of the border, but he also was unable to determine where the Soviet troops were delivering the main strike.[3]

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[1] Zakharov, 1960, p. 10.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 267-268.

[3] *Final*, 1969, p. 358.

The simultaneity factor was early endorsed by Marshal Zakharov:

> *The simultaneous delivery of a number of powerful Front and army strikes, unified by a single strategic design, permitted to achieve the defeat of the enemy in a relatively short period.* As proved by events, under these conditions the command of the Kwantung Army could not organize effective retaliatory actions: It had neither the time nor the opportunity for this.[1]

Victory in the Far East, however, omits the "simultaneous" characterization, stating that:

> Delivering powerful strikes in accordance with the overall design of the strategic operation, made it possible for the Soviet troops to defeat the Kwantung Army in a short time.[2]

A recent text on modern military doctrine discusses Soviet employment of the consecutive and the simultaneous methods of achieving strategic goals in World War II offensive campaigns, and depicts superior Soviet

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[1] Zakharov, 1960, pp. 10-11. Emphasis supplied. The importance of simultaneous initial strikes at the time is stressed also by Shtemenko, p. 333: "It also had to be borne in mind that if our assault groupings did not all strike at once, the Japanese would be able to deal with them piecemeal, by switching troops from one sector to another. This also led us to draw practical conclusions."

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 268. Another indication of sensitivity on the issue of simultaneity, or else, irresolution as to a clear-cut formulation that would accommodate a complex range of situations, is the discrepancy in accounts regarding disagreements in 1945 about the timing of the initial strike of the First Far Eastern Front. The second edition of *Final* (pp. 113-114) reports that until August 1, i.e., a week before the start of the offensive, two operational plans were in effect for the First Far Eastern Front: one, to assume the main offensive simultaneously with the Transbaikal Front; the other, to do so several days later on the gamble that the Japanese would switch some of their forces from here to counter the Transbaikal strike. The final resolution was made on August 7, when Stavka directed a simultaneous full offensive. Shtemenko's account (pp. 336 and 349) describes the argument as one between Vasilevskii and the General Staff, centering on whether the simultaneous offensive should involve advance units or the main forces of the First Far Eastern Front, with the General Staff insisting on the latter. Meretskov's account (p. 349) contradicts Shtemenko on Vasilevskii's position and attributes the delay proposal to Stavka. Vasilevskii in his memoirs remains silent on the subject.

strategic position as the criterion for employing simultaneous strikes along multiple axes:

> In the concluding winter campaign of 1945 in Europe and in defeating the Kwantung Army of imperialist Japan in August 1945, *the altered conditions* made it possible to employ the method of the simultaneous achieving of strategic goals on all axes of the front of armed combat.[1]

The plan stipulated a fast-action campaign. Marshal Meretskov endorses the strategy for rapid action throughout the entire offensive by noting that "we completely rejected the strategy of slow pressure," because it would have enabled the Japanese to draw out their defense and retreat.[2] According to Shtemenko, the "speed and overwhelming power" of the Soviet offensive foiled the Japanese plans for withdrawal and reorganization.[3] Rapid Soviet penetration in depth not only effectively blocked enemy withdrawal, but also limited Soviet losses.[4]

Marshal Vasilevskii in his memoirs offers an enumeration of the factors that permitted the high advance rates of the Soviet forces:

> Such high offensive rates by the Soviet troops, acting along individual and separated operational axes, were possible only thanks to the carefully thought out forces' grouping, the knowledge of the locale's natural features and of the enemy's defense system along each operational axis, the wide and daring use of tank, mechanized and cavalry divisions, the surprise of the attack, the high offensive spirit, audacious and exceptionally clever actions, bravery and mass heroism of the Red Army soldiers and seamen.[5]

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[1] Colonel General N. A. Lomov (Chief Editor), *Scientific-Technical Progress and the Revolution in Military Affairs*, USAF translation of the Russian-language volume *Nauchno-tekhnicheskii progress i revoliutsiia v voennom dele* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), p. 139. Emphasis supplied. General Lomov was one of the key General Staff planners of the Far East campaign.

[2] Meretskov, p. 342.

[3] Shtemenko, p. 333.

[4] Army General I. A. Pliev, *Cherez Gobi i Khingan* (Across the Gobi Desert an the Khinghans), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965, pp. 35-37.

[5] Vasilevskii, 1973, p. 165.

The Soviet penetration in depth was not confined to driving the enemy forces out; they were to be destroyed to ensure a rapid end of the war.[1] After the Kwantung Army command ordered ceasefire, the Soviet command ordered the accelerated capture of key Manchurian cities. Actions were not to be halted before full capitulation by the enemy.[2]

The "Fifth Column"

A crucial factor enabling the rapid advance of the Soviet forces was the assistance rendered to them by the indigenous population, who in many cases actively cooperated with the Soviet troops against their Japanese occupiers. General Shtemenko notes that the unreliability of the populace in the Japanese rear was an "important factor," constituting the "Achilles' heel" of the Japanese forces in Manchuria.[3] Specific ways in which the populace actively assisted the Soviet troops are described in several of the service arms histories. A recent article by General S. P. Ivanov dwells at length on the "liberation" aspect of the Soviet invasion and notes its favorable reception by the Chinese populace. Significantly, Ivanov also elaborates on the various ways in which Soviet occupation of Manchuria assisted the Chinese PLA in securing its hold; however, he is consistent in not attributing an active support role to the PLA.[4]

Advance Preparations

The plan objectives of a surprise offensive along multiple axes with rapidly advancing mobile units posed "in a completely new manner" the

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[1] Shtemenko, p. 334; Vasilevskii, 1973, p. 160.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 167; Liudnikov, pp. 97-98.

[3] Col.-Gen. Shtemenko, "Iz istorii razgroma Kvantunskoi armii (From the History of the Rout of the Kwantung Army)," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 4, April 1967, p. 60. See also Shtemenko, p. 331, which states: "All China was the enemy of the Japnese militarists."

[4] Army General S. P. Ivanov, "Noble Mission of the Liberating Army," *Krasnaia zvezda*, September 10, 1974. That analysts like General Ivanov are concerned that due consideration be given to the importance of passive or active assistance rendered by indigenous elements for successful major lightning invasion operations, is further demonstrated by the fact that the volume on *The Initial Phase of War*, edited and co-authored by General Ivanov, includes a concise section on the substantial role of the "fifth column" in

question of organizing and conducting military actions in the "conditions of mountainous desert, mountains, and mountainous taiga [forest] localities of the Far East."[1] The unique features of the preparations for the strategic operation as well as the individual Front and army operations are in essence defined by the following factors:

- The deployment of strike groupings and troops (1) in the difficult staging areas of the Far East, (2) along a 4400 km extension of the border, and (3) along separated axes. "The characteristic peculiarity of the deployment of the strategic grouping is the transfer of a part of the armed forces from the Western to the Far East military theater."
- Ensuring secrecy of all preparatory measures, especially the large-scale troop transfer and transport of materiel and fuel.
- Striving to ensure surprise assumption of the offensive and to obtain strategic outcomes within the initial phase of the war.

> The preparation of military actions was carried out before the declaration of war; therefore the measures that had to be implemented at all levels differed radically from the measures in preparing strategic operations conducted in the Western military theater.[2]

The preparatory period of the Manchurian campaign is seen as consisting of two distinct phases: (1) preliminary preparations prior to handing down the Supreme Command's directives to the Fronts, i.e., *before* the assignment

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aiding invading forces during the initial operations of World War II. See Ivanov, pp. 235-237.

The offensive assumed by the PLA on or around August 11 has not figured in Soviet accounts as a support factor. Where the campaign map presented in the 1966 edition of *Final* (following p. 240) had indicated the PLA effort with three small arrows NW of Peking, the 1969 edition of *Final* had eliminated this indicator of PLA actions on its map (following p. 88).

[1]This discussion is based on *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 73-75.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 74; Zakharov, 1969, p. 15.

of concrete missions; and (2) direct preparations of Front and army operations, i.e., 30 to 35 days before the start of hostilities.[1]

The following concise summary presents some of the major points made in Soviet discussions of the preliminary preparatory measures.

It is pointed out that the prior presence of a sizable force (20 divisions) in the Maritime Province served not only to guarantee against enemy preemptive attack, but also to develop the theater so that it was ready to accommodate and deploy the large transferred forces that arrived shortly before the offensive.[2]

It is expedient to regroup the Fronts in the theater for the forthcoming campaign prior to the arrival of the transferred forces. In this manner, the transferred troops upon arrival can immediately go into joint training with the other forces designated for operations in the particular sector.

The presence in the Far East of a sizable number of troops and materiel stockpiles significantly reduced the time needed for the preparation of the campaign.[3] The safe margin of materiel on hand was ensured by stockpiling to a considerably greater extent than is usual, so that, in case the main rail link was incapacitated, Front rears could supply all needs. Thus, the First Far Eastern Front had stockpiles for four months, Sakhalin and Kamchatka for one year.[4] This was accomplished by stockpiling in earlier years as well as during preparations.

The timely organization of the appropriate rear services system was of the essence. The campaign taught the efficacy of creating a special rear administration body for this distant war theater to receive, distribute, and deploy the vast amounts of supplies.[5]

Throughout the preparations, the possibility of a preemptive attack by the enemy was guarded against by placing in readiness the national and

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 74. Marshal Zakharov in his 1969 aritcle precisely delineates the preparatory measures carried out well in advance and those executed during the immediate preparatory period (pp. 15-21).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

[3] *Final*, 1969, p. 368.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

[5] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 319-320.

theater air defense forces, by deploying air and tank forces to guard transport lines and airfields, and by having prepared defensive operation plans on hand, which included the assumption of the offensive also in this contingency.[1] In May 1945, Maritime Province forces started construction of enlarged defense works, simultaneously designed for use in counterattack and passing over to the offensive.[2]

An intense concern in Soviet prewar preparations was the safeguarding of Soviet troops against the anticipated Japanese resort to germ warfare. Already in March 1945, the Chief of the Soviet General Staff had evaluated a detailed report by the medical corps, which called for rigorous measures to build up the medical service for the campaign. Top priority was given to mass inoculation of Soviet troops against the plague and other infectious diseases before the start of the campaign.[3]

A couple of general admonitions regarding the unique imperatives of the Far East theater in preparing and staging military actions are worthy of note:

> Experience demonstrated that military actions in the peculiar conditions of the theater absolutely necessitate careful training of staffs and many-sided education and training of all arms of the services. This increases the role and importance of the organizational and preparatory phase of operations.[4]

> Also, the circumstance should be noted that in the conditions of the Far East locality, troop concentration, regrouping and deployment require more time than the implementation of these measures in the West European theater of military actions [*na Zapadno-Evropeiskom teatre voennykh deistvii*]. This is due to the great territorial expanses, the poorly developed system and, as a rule, low quality of dirt roads, the almost inaccessible locality, which at times altogether precludes movement off roads, and the unreliable, frequently changing weather.[5]

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 82; *Final*, 1969, p. 100; Zakharov, 1969, p. 16.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 78.

[3] *Final*, 1969, pp. 159-163, describes the medical corps preparations in detail. See also ibid., pp. 75-77, on Soviet concerns about Japanese use of germ warfare and suicide commandos in the Soviet rear as "novel"means of warfare.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 305.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1971, p. 81. This statement has been lifted from Zakharov's 1969 article (p. 17) and significantly altered to render it more didactic. For one, Zakharov does not use the curious "West European theater" comparison. Also, Zakharov's allusion to Soviet reliance on railways for troop

Command Organization

The magnitude and complexity of the campaign effort and the remoteness of the theater necessitated instituting a new link of High Command in the theater--the Far East Commander-in-Chief with his staff. This constituted an important departure from the established Soviet command arrangements during World War II, whereby direct and immediate control of the operations of the Fronts was exercised at the Stavka level.[1] The established practice of delegating a Stavka representative to oversee the operations in the theater proved to be inadequate for the Far East campaign, because here he "had to solve a number of completely new tasks that customarily had not been encountered in the war in the West."[2] In this, he was handicapped by lack of juridical authority over civilian institutions and, in fact, over the Fronts themselves, "as these, strictly speaking, were not subordinated to him."

According to Shtemenko, the very nature of the operation as one that involved converging rather than parallel and adjacent axes as had been the case in the Western theater, and the active support of the ground forces by the Navy necessitated the institution of a theater command.[3]

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regrouping has been eliminated, which is consistent with the more recent study's stress on air and organic means of troop and supply transport. See below, p. 82, for a discussion regarding doctrinal approval of aerial bombardment of Manchurian railways.

[1]The exception was the early period of the war, when on July 10, 1941 the command of Soviet forces was organized into three large "Fronts" that were in effect theater commands. Later in 1941, these were broken down into smaller commands directly subordinated to the Supreme High Command or Stavka. A recent Shtemenko comment recalls the existence of the early High Commands and notes: "Initially they did not have an effective machinery of their own to direct operations and were therefore excluded from the overall pattern of combat leadership. It was decided to return to this system only at the closing stage of the war. In 1945, in the Far East . . . the Soviet Commander-in-Chief Marshal Vasilevsky had at his disposal, first, a group of officers and later a small but experienced staff headed by General Semyon Ivanov. *This staff assumed control over operations.*" (Shtemenko, May 1975, p. 5. Emphasis supplied.)

[2]*Final*, 1969, pp. 96-98. This discussion of the reasons that prompted the change in command structure is new in the second edition and relies on Shtemenko's memoirs, which were published in 1968.

[3]Shtemenko, p. 345; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 326, limits its discussion to noting the essential function of the Far East High Command in coordinating multiple and separate operations that involve joint actions by different forces. Its initial reference to the "Stavka of the FE CINC" was changed to "FE CINC and his staff" in the second edition (1966, p. 267 and 1971, p. 312).

In his 1967 review of the first edition of *Final*, Marshal Vasilevskii had devoted two pages to outline the "additional circumstances," besides the remoteness of the theater mentioned in the book, that necessitated instituting the Far East High Command. Somewhat contentiously, he asserted that "in my view, establishing the Far East High Command as the organ of strategic troop command fully proved itself."[1] As particular advantages he noted that the theater command ensured effective coordination of the efforts of the different services and full exploitation of their potentials for the "quickest" achievement of campaign aims. Moreover, it afforded exacting implementation of the Supreme Command directives as well as immediate reaction to changes in the situation.[2] Vasilevskii also recalled that an important consideration in creating the Far East CinC post had been the desire of the political leadership to have a representative in the area who was authorized to dictate terms of capitulation to the Japanese and carry on negotiations with Allied authorities.

The Far East CinC post was not officially created until July 30, 1945, after Vasilevskii's first weeks on location had proven that his authority as Stavka representative was insufficient.[3] At this time also the CinC staff was formed consisting of the officers that Vasilevskii had brought with him the first week of July and the General Staff officers stationed in the Far East. The High Command included the Chief Marshal of the Air

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[1]Vasilevskii, 1967, pp. 84-85. For another unequivocal and authoritative endorsement, see Shtemenko, p. 346.

[2]Vasilevskii stresses that the "Supreme Commander maintained direct and daily communications with the acting Fronts even while he was at the Potsdam Conference" (1967, p. 85). This is borne out by Shtemenko's testimony in his article "Iz istorii razgroma Kvantunskoi armii" (From the History of the Rout of the Kwantung Army), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 5, May 1967, p. 53. Ivanov, p. 294, notes that the "Stavka of the Supreme High Command and the General Staff maintained constant control over the preparation and conduct of the campaign and stayed in direct communication with the commanders of the Fronts and the Navy." Similarly, at the level of field command, it was sought to combine commanders' initiative with close control by superior levels of command (see pp. 48-49 below).

[3]In his May 1967 article, Shtemenko claims that establishing the post of a theater commander with a staff was originally proposed by the General Staff and concurred in by Vasilevskii after his arrival in the Far East (p. 52). This claim is sustained in *Final* (1969, pp. 97-98), but the 1968 edition of Shtemenko's memoirs attributes the original suggestion to Stalin as early as April 1945.

Forces A. A. Novikov, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy Admiral N. G. Kuznetsov also arrived in the Far East after August 3.[1]

The campaign also provided valuable new experience of joint actions with allied forces, i.e., the Mongolian armed forces on the Transbaikal Front, confirming the advisability of creating a single staff of command. Operational command groups consisting of both Soviet and Mongolian officers ensured cooperation in the field. Identical organizational structure of the forces, identical equipment, and common training principles for the troops helped achieve reliable and effective mutual support.[2]

IMPLEMENTATION OF OPERATIONAL PLANNING: FRONTS AND ARMIES[3]

This section presents in more detail the particulars of operational planning that were the responsibility of the Fronts and Armies in the theater.

During the last month before the offensive, Front and Army commanders planned the exact deployments of forces along the axes of attack, defined advance rates, and organized the multifarious supply system for the offensive. They devised and implemented the cover and deception measures that maintained the secrecy of preparations and the logistics and training solutions to the massive redeployments and transfers of troops and equipment in the theater shortly before the offensive. During the course of the campaign they improvised solutions to problems that had not been foreseen or solved by the plans, such as the use of airborne landings to capture enemy centers and the assigning of air transport for fuel and water resupply of the rapidly advancing forces.

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[1] Shtemenko, p. 349, reports that in his telephone conversation with Stalin on August 3 Vasilevskii had demanded that Admiral Kuznetsov be "urgently" dispatched to the Far East to coordinate ground and naval support.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 313.

[3] *Final*, 1969, pp. 99-133, *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 47-131; 1971, pp. 62-167, and Marshal Zakharov's 1969 article treat the various aspects and lessons of operational planning in a systematic manner. The actual field-level planning effort after July 5, when the Stavka directive was received by the Fronts, is recounted in concrete detail in the memoirs of the Transbaikal Front Army Commanders Pliev (pp. 28-41) and Liudnikov (pp. 40-53). A very concise overview of the prominent features in the organization and conduct of Front operations is provided in Strokov, *op. cit.*, pp. 515-517.

Planning Procedures

Because of the extreme concern with secrecy, only four people in each Front and Army knew the full plans. The plan decisions were indicated only on the commanders' maps with no written documentation. All orders were communicated orally. Front and Army commanders personally reconnoitered the locations of the projected axes of attack and then made detailed specifications for the main axes, unit missions, as well as force concentration areas and march routes. Meretskov notes that

> for the first time officers were sent on reconnoitering missions so that . . . HQ would have a clear idea of where and how our troops would have to operate.[1]

Characteristics of Operational Plans

A unique feature of the Manchurian campaign was that Front missions were to be accomplished in single operations rather than in successive ones, as had been the experience on the German Front. The Front sectors reached operational widths of 700-2300 km and depths of 600-800 km. According to *Final*:

> The execution of Front missions of such depths was possible because of the strength and surprise of the first strike, the presence of powerful mobile units in the formations of the Transbaikal and First Far Eastern Fronts, the absence of prepared defense lines in the depth of enemy dispositions, our dominance of the airspace, and the high rapidity, boldness and uninterruptedness of the offensive of Soviet forces, who swiftly and astutely overcame enemy resistance and difficult natural obstacles.[2]

The operational plans for every axis of attack were designed in an individualized manner taking into account the prevailing terrain characteristics and the state of enemy defenses, and not according to some set formula.[3]

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[1] Meretskov, pp. 331-332. Meretskov himself rode horseback through the taiga and posed as a border guard to inspect the location.

[2] *Final*, 1969, pp. 361-362.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1969, p. 362.

> A common characteristic, however, of all Front and Army operations was wide maneuver employing outflanking and turning movements, and encirclement of important enemy formations.[1]

"Compact attack formations" were created on all main offensive axes; "this resulted in attaining significant superiority over the enemy."[2]

Given a rapidly unfolding campaign, it also proved essential to have advance alternate plans and ready reserves along those axes where precise information on enemy defenses was lacking, so that opportunities arising during the course of the offensive could be fully exploited.[3]

Force Formations

Combined arms operations were planned for all axes, adjusted to suit the individual characteristics of each sector. To ensure maneuverability, firepower, and rapid penetration in depth, tanks and mechanized forces formed the basis of all main effort groupings.[4] *Final* notes that

> the placement of mobile forces in the operational formations of the Fronts was completely preconditioned on an assessment of the enemy forces and the nature of their defenses, and on the conditions of the locality.[5]

To illustrate the point, it contrasts the forward deployment of the VI Guards Tank Army with that of the 10th Mechanized Corps--the mobile strike force of the First Far Eastern Front, which was employed "to develop success and was thrown into action after the strongly fortified defense line had been breached."

Deploying the VI Guards Tank Army in the first operational echelon[6] of the Transbaikal Front

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[1] *Victory in Far East,* 1971, p. 323.

[2] *Final,* 1969, p. 362.

[3] *Victory in the Far East,* 1966, p. 269.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 279.

[5] *Final,* 1969, p. 362.

[6] In Soviet usage, the term "echelon" has two distinct meanings. One corresponds to the American usage and denotes that units are staggered one in the rear of another to produce wedges. The other corresponds to the American usage of "wave," i.e., the first wave of attack, the second wave of attack, etc. Occasionally, in this second sense the Soviets will employ the term "second echelon" to refer to what in American military terminology would be called "reserves."

> in the beginning of the war, ensured the surprise of the attack, deep intrusion into the operational depth of enemy defenses, the prevention of enemy main forces' deployment, [and] created favorable conditions for successfully developing the offensive of the combined-arms armies.[1]

This is also an issue, which appears to be surrounded by certain controversy. In his memoirs, General Shtemenko belabors the crucial importance of a powerful and penetrating first strike for the development of the campaign and, hence, the expediency of this particular deployment. *Final*, however, harps on the hazards that were inherent in the strategy at the time, because of the incomplete Soviet information on Japanese defenses along this sector. It also points to the unique combination of poor enemy defenses and favorable terrain as factors permitting this deployment.[2] At the same time, there is general appreciation of the deployment's meeting the dictate to exploit fully the success of an initial surprise attack.[3]

Acclaim of the formal Soviet success during this particular campaign with first echelon deployment of tank units "for decisive and rapid actions with possible separation from the main forces" is reiterated frequently and

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 278. It notes that the Stavka decision stipulating this particular deployment was based on the understanding that Japanese defenses in the zone were deficient.

[2] Shtemenko's account notes Malinovsky's reluctance at the time to agree to the deployment and, in effect, credits the persevering determination of the General Staff with getting the decision through (pp. 335, 338-339, 342-345). The 1969 edition of *Final* (pp. 106-108) discusses the decision and notes that in the mid-June 1945 confrontation between the General Staff and the Transbaikal Front Command neither side had precise information on the enemy grouping in the area. It also notes that a factor in the final agreement on the first echelon deployment of the Tank Army was a delay in transporting the 53rd Army, initially designated by the Front Command as the spearhead force.

[3] Zakharov, 1969, p. 19; Col. I. Krupchenko, "6-ia gvardeiskaia tankovaia armiia v Khingano-Mukdenskoi operatsii (The 6th Guards Tank Army in the Khingans-Mukden Operation)," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 12, December 1962, p. 16. Herafter cited as Krupchenko.

pointedly in the major Soviet writings on the campaign. This bold deployment is adjudged as decisive on both the operational and tactical level, and, indeed, exalted as an advance in the evolution of military art.[1]

The densities of tank and artillery deployment were unusually high: 30-40 tanks per km of front and as many as 200 guns and mortars per km of front in the breach zones of the First Far Eastern Front.[2] The operational lesson is explicitly drawn that the campaign fully demonstrated that the region, including the Greater Khingans range, is accessible to large masses of troops equipped with modern technology, tanks proving especially suited for versatile missions.[3]

It is also asserted that in a theater that is in a mountainous and forested locale it is important to have substantial Front reserves on hand.[4]

The major accounts criticize certain serious oversights in operational planning. A major oversight was the failure to plan simultaneous naval assault operations to be carried out by the Pacific Navy. This deprived the Navy of valuable preparation time.[5] There were also no plans for air interdiction

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[1]In addition to the works cited immediately above, see also Liudnikov, p. 112, and Vasilevskii, 1973, p. 167, who cites his August 18 order as theater CinC to the Fronts to form strong advance detachments of tanks, motorized rifle, and artillery units that should proceed to take the major centers of Manchuria "without fearing great separation from their main forces." Ivanov, pp. 229-231, analyzes the tentative German experimentation with advanced and separated tank shock formations as a "major step forward in the combat deployment of tank forces," and notes their fears and vacillations in implementing this principle.

[2]*Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 327; Meretskov, p. 344.

[3]*Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 329.

[4]*Ibid.*, 1966, p. 269.

[5]*Final*, 1969, p. 86, notes that "the campaign plan envisaged that all operations on the Kuriles Islands were to be carried out with the support of the Pacific Fleet. . . . However, up to the start of hostilities the Navy did not receive specific orders for amphibious landings on the islands. Neither were the assault operations of the Fleet to seize North Korean ports and execute amphibious landings on South Sakhalin stipulated in good time. . . . The mission to seize the ports in Korea and the Kuriles was given to the Navy only after the start of hostilities, following the successful offensive of the Red Army's ground forces in Manchuria." *Ibid.*, p. 166, describes the serious problems encountered by the Navy due to the belated organization of materiel and craft.

of possible enemy movements to the Greater Khingan passes, and the rebasing of air support for the tank army was overlooked.[1] The results on the Second Far Eastern Front considerably exceeded those planned.[2]

Initial Operations

The initial stunning blow to the enemy was to be exploited for a dynamic, uninterrupted advance along all axes of attack. According to *Final*,

> Combat experience in the European theater proved that *for the successful development of the operations of the initial phase of the war*, it is most important that the maneuver form of forces going over into the offensive be flexible and dynamic and permit the delivery of a powerful first strike and development of the campaign at great depth, *regardless of the occasional absence of tactical coordination and great separation of the mobile units from infantry*.
>
> This proposition was confirmed especially vividly in the Far East campaign where plans envisaged high offensive rates of our troops and a wide maneuver of forces and means. Additionally, all of this had to be executed under conditions of great dispersion of Front and Army operational axes, and in some cases, even division axes.[3]

Soviet loss of initiative during the campaign would have given the Japanese time to engage the Soviet spearhead forces in battle as well as time to regroup and counterattack. The high advance rates designated by the Front commanders before the campaign, were, as a rule, increased even more by the Army commands.[4]

In the very first days of the offensive, the success of the main effort generated new Front demands to accelerate the advance rates on

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 340; *Final*, 1969, pp. 126-127.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 325.

[3] *Final*, 1969, pp. 135-136. Emphasis supplied.

[4] Vasilevskii, 1973, p. 162; Liudnikov, pp. 46-47; Pliev, pp. 35-37. In a lengthy account of an argument with his chief of staff, Pliev defends the soundness of exceptionally rapid advance despite the vulnerabilities it generates, such as tenuous consolidation of positions and possible loss of communications.

related axes. These goals then had to be met at all costs, and Pliev reports that:

> Marshal Malinovsky always set before us tasks, which assisted the success of the main forces of the Front. Even if the impossible had to be accomplished, these tasks had to be carried out.[1]

Liudnikov notes that in view of the great separation of adjacent units, support basically was effected by coordinating advance rates in the plan:

> ...we took into account the proposed high offensive rates of the tankmen of the VI GTA. This was the basic condition of support.

The armies could attain the necessary rapid advance because they had deployed powerful mobile advance units.[2] Wherever feasible, these advance forces bypassed fortified areas or blocked Japanese forces, leaving engagement and mop-up to the main forces. Simultaneously, massed advance air bombing strikes were delivered against enemy communications, transport, and military command centers.[3] The mission targets of the ground forces equally were Japanese communications and military centers.[4] The claim is made, but in a tentative manner, that Soviet actions caused the Kwantung Army staff to lose command of its forces by the second day of operations.[5]

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[1] Pliev, pp. 60-61.

[2] Liudnikov, ibid.; Pliev, ibid.

[3] Victory in the Far East 1971, p. 329; Final 1969, p. 366.

[4] Liudnikov, pp. 45-46 defines the rationale:

> Advance of our troops onto the basic communications of the enemy prevented operational cooperation of his dismembered groupings and enabled their defeat in parts. Based on this, the Military Council of the 39th Army concluded that it is necessary to win time during the course of the operation...that in Manchuria one needed to avoid the methodical erosion of defenses. ...Consequently, it was necessary to plan such rates that would stun the enemy, would deprive him of the opportunity to maneuver reserves, would not permit the forming of new defense lines in his positions, and would completely paralyze cooperation between different groupings of the Kwantung Army.

[5] Vasilevskii, 1973, p. 168; *Final*, 1969, p. 180.

The use of "advance detachments" is singled out as a crucial factor enabling the rapid advance of the Soviet formations. Whether these advance detachments should be adjudged the proper jurisdiction of the motorized infantry forces or of the tank forces appears to be a matter of some dispute.[1]

These fast-moving powerful shock units, consisting of about 1,000 men on vehicles and reinforced with artillery, special units, and tanks, operated up to 100 km ahead of the first echelon main forces, neutralizing or capturing enemy resistance pockets. Already in 1960, Marshal Zakharov had signalled the contemporary usefulness of this experience:

> Given the high rates of offensive, whereby forces often were advancing in columns, wide use was made of advance detachments, a great number of these having been formed before the start of operations in the armies of all three fronts. These detachments, consisting primarily of tank brigades reinforced with motorized infantry and artillery on tracked vehicles, defeated enemy covering detachments, thus enabling the main forces to continue advancing, frequently without deploying. ...Under conditions of a rapid offensive and fast development of events, the advance detachments recommended themselves well. The experience of their use must be studied and introduced into practice.[2]

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[1] Thus, Zakharov (1960, p. 14) and *Final* (1969, p. 364) define the advance detachments as having "consisted primarily of tank brigades, reinforced with motorized infantry," whereas *Victory in the Far East* (1966, p. 276) reverses this to state that the detachments "comprised a battalion to a regiment of infantry placed on auto vehicles and reinforced with tanks." The Liudnikov volume incorporates both viewpoints. Describing the advance detachments in detail, it represents them as motorized infantry units heavily reinforced with artillery units and notes that "behind the advance detachments, a tank brigade advanced in the first echelon" (Liudnikov, pages 78, 80, and 50). Liudnikov's "Conclusions," however, assert that "tanks constituted the core of the advance detachments " (Liudnikov, p. 112). In this same volume, a postscript by Colonel-General of Artillery N. Fomin notes that because of the high artillery component of the advance detachments they were frequently under the command of artillerymen (Liudnikov, p. 117). Additional comments on the advance detachments can be found below, in the section on Armored and Mechanized Forces, p. 68, and the section on Air Forces, p. 81 .

[2] Zakharov, 1960, p. 14.

Command and Control

In 1960, Marshal Zakharov noted the instructive value of the campaign experience for solving command and control problems in a highly dispersed offensive along multiple axes:

> Despite the great dispersion of the attack groupings, the command and staffs succeeded in attaining precise coordination of their actions during the course of the operation. An offensive along separate axes is characteristic of modern combat. The study of this problem according to the experience of the Manchurian operation can provide useful material for modern military theory and combat training of the troops. ...
>
> The experience of the VI Guards Tank Army and other armies, which attacked along independent axes, demonstrated the exceptionally great importance, which under such conditions belongs to reconnaissance and flank protection, and also to communication with adjacent units. The study of this experience can be of considerable benefit for modern combat training of troops and staffs.[1]

Concern with the breakdown of communications and troop control was pervasive and received serious attention already in the planning stages of the campaign.[2] The grand scale, complexity, and planned rapidity of operations required novel flexibility in command arrangements so that the twin objectives of ensuring full troop control and guaranteeing continued action in case of communications breakdown could be met. This necessitated foregoing the customary rigorously centralized command and control arrangements and increasing the initiative and authority of all levels of theater and field command.[3]

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[1]Zakharov, 1960, pp. 12-13.

[2]Lt. General of Signal Troops P. Kurochkin, who was Deputy Chief of Communications on the FE CINC staff during the campaign, reports that he was "struck with the great attention to the communications service by the top leadership" and that in the Stavka campaign directive troops command and control ranked among the very top priorities. P. Kurochkin, "V shtabe Glavkoma na Dal'nem Vostoke (On the Staff of FE CINC)," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 11, November 1967, p. 77. Hereafter cited as Kurochkin.

[3]Pliev (p. 35) observes that the Front command permitted the Soviet-Mongol Group "freedom of action and full opportunity to show initiative"

The delegation of some of the heretofore exclusively centrally-held command authority to a theater commander and his staff has been described above (pp. 37-40). In the theater itself, staff operational groups were formed from the Front, Army, and corps staffs, and during staff relocation these operational groups exercised command.

The campaign accounts make it clear that the very circumstances characterizing the theater and the speed of operations made reliance on lower command initiative unavoidable. The practical lesson drawn is that it is "especially important" to issue orders to the field units that, while precise, also define the larger purposes of their mission so as to guarantee continued action in case of communications loss:

> The intensity of the offensive, the rapid development of military actions, and the difficult conditions of the military theater imposed demands for unusual flexibility and strain in the work of staffs at all levels.
>
> In these conditions, whereby continuous control could be interrupted, it was of especial importance to give orders to the troops that, while precise, also defined the perspectives of the mission, thus avoiding restricting the commanders' initiative in case of temporary loss of communications with superior staffs.[1]

Equally concretely, it is recommended that advance detachments that are to operate independently in mountainous sectors must be given orders in advance.[2]

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in fulfilling its mission of covering the flank of the main Transbaikal axis. Colonel General N. Fomin (in Liudnikov, p. 116) claims that in the Far East operations "commanders at all levels were given considerably greater independence than on the Soviet-German front." *Victory in the Far East* (1971, p. 325) notes that the absence of a tightly structured front on the Second Far Eastern Front permitted high maneuverability of the forces in every direction. It also notes that the results achieved on the same Front exceeded the plan.

At the same time, there was no relaxation of tight coordination on the part of the higher levels of command. Liudnikov, p. 56, notes the Front command's order to his Army staff on August 8, which "made it obligatory for us to report to the Front staff every four hours regarding combat actions."

[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 294.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1971, p. 334.

Maintaining troop control also required that command posts be kept "as close as possible" to the advancing troops. As a rule, Army command posts stayed within 20-30 km of their troops, the corps' 10-15 km. On the Transbaikal Front this led to relocating Army staffs at least every two days and, consequently, troop command was exercised while on the move. The present day relevance of this experience is authoritatively asserted:

> From the standpoint of modern conditions, the communications organization of the Transbaikal Front during the course of operations is especially instructive.[1]

The planned close support among ground, air, and naval forces dictated advance arrangements for command coordination of the different forces. These measures extended to the units in the field. Thus, air Army representatives were assigned not only to the ground Army commands but also to the advance units of the ground forces.[2]

The technical problems of communications and control were less successfully anticipated. These and the practical conclusions drawn in this respect are discussed in the section on "Communications Troops," below (pp. 72-74). During the course of the campaign, the rapid multi-axis advance forced the Soviet forces to relinquish the planned reliance on cable communications and resort extensively to radio and aircraft as communications means.

Supply Organization

Fronts also had to carry out the detailed advance planning of supplies and supply transport for the forces. *Final* notes that "everyone understood that on this ... depended the success of the entire offensive." It also notes that "heeding the experience of the last war, front commanders and their staffs ... insisted that the operation's supply and materiel organization be carried out in the most painstaking

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 370-371.

[2] Liudnikov, p. 41.

manner." Because of the undeveloped and difficult terrain,

> military actions in Manchuria were in the nature of an offensive in separate columns operating without direct tactical communication with each other. Therefore, already before the start of the offensive, provisions were made for all necessary measures of combat, engineering, road, and materiel support, and increasing the independence of actions of such columns.[1]

Accounts depict problems with fuel supply as the most critical and note these were due primarily to incorrect estimates of what proved to be above-norm consumption because of terrain and lack of roads, and to lack of proper supply transport. The use of air transport, employed for the first time to supply fuel and lubricants to advancing troops, proved its value, and also highlighted the necessity for advance planning and craft allocation. Moreover, in desert areas, fuel resupply necessitates plentiful auto transport with good cross-country mobility. The accounts note as a resort in fuel emergencies the use of trophy gasoline or pooling scarce fuel, as this permitted advancing skeletal units to complete the mission.

The peculiar problem of making arrangements for water supply in desert locales is discussed in detail and deemed a surmountable problem, given proper specially-trained engineering support and equipment.[2] Air transport was used to ferry water to the troops, but the basic solution was strict rationing of water and the assignment of specially trained water crews to dig wells in the desert.

Field Intelligence

Having learned on the German Front that the most important precondition for a successful offensive was thorough intelligence on the

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 143, 136, and 364.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1969, pp. 128, 138-142, 363-364, 369; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 350-351; Tsirlin, pp. 36-48; Air Marshal S. I. Rudenko (editor-in-chief), *Sovetskie Voenno-Vozdushnye Sily v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine 1941-1945 gg.* (Soviet Air Force in the Great Fatherland War), Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968, p. 427. Hereafter cited as Rudenko.

opponent, commanders and staffs devoted "exceptional attention" to intelligence during preparations in the Far East.[1] At the same time, in the Far East opportunities for intelligence operations were more stringently limited than elsewhere because of the fact that, since war had not been declared and its very preparations were kept secret, the border regimen had to be strictly observed to avoid signalling intentions to the enemy.

This excluded reconnaissance by apparata drops, aerial photography, and reconnaissance in force. Fronts were limited to reliance on visual ground observation and on intelligence data supplied by central agencies. Radio reconnaissance carried out by the Front staffs and the staff of FE CINC, especially of the operational dispositions of the Kwantung Army, became of major importance. Aerial photography was still useful, though to a very limited extent because of the requirement not to violate the border line. It provided data on enemy defenses up to 40 km in depth. Numerous ground observation posts were constructed, but these could survey enemy territory only up to 6 km depth. Here, the border troops are credited with having greatly assisted the field forces in obtaining information on the enemy.

The data obtained from these various sources were used in the preparation of detailed maps of enemy border defenses, which were then distributed down to the company commander level.

Once operations had started, air reconnaissance was carried out on a large scale. The experience of utilizing combat aircraft to assist the recce air forces in this mission is noted as being "of definite interest."[2]

Preparing the Theater for Deployments

Demanding responsibilities of the Fronts were the timely preparation of the theater to receive and deploy the transferred forces, their deployment after disembarkation to the distant concentration areas (as a

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[1] *Final*, 1969, p. 130.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 341.

rule, by organic transportation), and the intensive training of all forces for the forthcoming missions.

Forces training and deployment were combined; it is well noted that this both deflected enemy suspicions and effectively served to consolidate the new Soviet units.[1]

The "practical" lessons of the preparations carried out by the different Fronts and the effectiveness of the cover of these operations are described in the 1971 edition of *Victory in the Far East*.[2]

It also suggests transport solutions for the regrouping and deployment of large forces. Noting that even in 1945 the degree of troop motorization permitted regrouping by organic means over considerable distances, it observes:

> In view of the limited availability of railroads, [regrouping by organic means] made it possible to speed up troop concentration considerably and thereby gain time for the combat training of troops. It must be assumed that troop movement by combined means will be the basic method of concentrating and deploying force groupings in mountainous desert localities. The success of the march movements relying on the auto transport and traction means of that time in the very difficult Far East locality, permits to assert that, given the modern equipment of the troops, regroupings by organic means can be the main method and not just a supplementary one.[3]

Considerable interest is shown in the experience of the Transbaikal Front, where forces assumed the offensive without prior deployment to staging areas. The 17th Army, VI Guards Tank Army, and the Mechanized Cavalry Group did not take up starting positions, but assumed the offensive on the march from their concentration areas. Marshal Zakharov notes that this could be done because of the absence of enemy defenses or forces near the border and the terrain, i.e., desert and mountains, but nevertheless, concludes:

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[1]Zakharov 1969, pp. 12-13; *Victory in the Far East 1966*, pp. 104-110; Liudnikov, pp. 20 and 31.

[2]*Victory in the Far East, 1971*, pp. 74-83, 316-320.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 83.

> The actions of these forces provide an instructive example of advancing and deploying offensive formations on the march, without preliminary positioning in starting areas, for offensive in the first operations of the beginning period of a war. This experience is of practical interest also today.[1]

Victory in the Far East observes:

> This experience is of practical interest for instructing and training troops for actions in similar terrain conditions. Here it must be taken into account that the higher degree of motorization of modern forces and their higher maneuverability permit carrying out force regroupings and advance in even less time and at faster rates.[2]

This approach, however, is unworkable in terrains, such as those of First and Second Far Eastern Fronts; there, preparations for the storming of water and enemy fortification barriers require considerable time of troop and staff presence in the waiting and start areas.

Cover of Preparations

The extensive preparation of the theater had to be accomplished in secrecy,

> because compromising the surprise of the start of the war could irretrievably prejudice the planned development of the operations.[3]

Despite the fact that the Kwantung Army command had intelligence on intensive Soviet troop movements, the Soviets succeeded in achieving surprise, due greatly to "brilliantly executed troop deployment and positioning at the borders":

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[1]Zakharov, 1969, p. 17.

[2]*Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 81.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 317-318.

> The experience of the Soviet-Japanese war in covering up the concentration and deployment of troops while preparing Front and Army operations can be of practical interest in a number of aspects in planning modern operations.[1]

The following practices enabled secrecy of preparations and the surprise of the Soviet forces' assumption of the offensive.[2]

- o Stringent limitations on the number of people involved in planning the Army and Front offensive operations, and tightest security on all documentation (in longhand).
- o Effecting force concentration, regroupings and deployment with simultaneous conducting of various training exercises.
- o Meticulous observation of camouflage in all troop movements.
- o Implementing measures in accordance with plans for the operational camouflage of each Front.
- o No radio communications activity for the newly arrived forces.
- o Continuing the established service regimen on the state borders as well as the customary daily routine of forces quartered in the border zone.
- o Implementing measures to prevent border penetration by enemy agents and scouts (intensifying counter-reconnaissance activity, reinforcing the border troops, carrying out additional mining of key sections of the state border, etc.).
- o Additionally, reconnaissance in force by advance battalions along a broad front was planned and successfully carried out.

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 83.

[2] Listed in *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 318-319.

Victory in the Far East notes that despite great care in implementing camouflage measures, the enemy on the eve of the Soviet offensive was aware of the Soviet buildup and even pinpointed the location of some of the regrouped formations. The most serious difficulties were encountered in the Mongolian desert areas and with transports on the maritime rail line along the border. Suspicions had also been aroused by Soviet aerial reconnaissance alongside the border.

> All of this points up the necessity to implement camouflage measures that are well thought out, consistent and carefully verified as to their precise implementation.[1]

An essentially identical enumeration of effective cover measures is provided in *Final* and in more concrete detail, *viz.*, members of the theater high command functioned under assumed names and rank, using these also when signing official directives during the preparation period; all troop movements were conducted exclusively at night, including all Maritime Province troop rail transports; a bogus force concentration area was constructed along the First Far Eastern Front.[2] A concise historical account of the various cover measures employed during the preparatory period is provided in *Victory in the Far East.*[3] It singles out the

> experience of the regrouping and secret deployment of significant numbers of aircraft along the main axes of the Fronts [as] being of definite interest since these measures remained undiscovered by the enemy.[4]

It dwells on these procedures in considerable detail; the comments are covered in the "Air Forces" section of this Note.

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 342.

[2] *Final*, 1969, pp. 129-133.

[3] 1966 ed., pp. 101-103; 1971 ed., pp. 134-137.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 342.

III. SERVICES, BRANCHES, AND SPECIAL FORCES

GROUND FORCES

Infantry

The rifle troops or infantry were the basic troops of Fronts and Armies and are credited with having played the main role during the course of the campaign.[1] A total of 72 infantry and motorized infantry divisions participated in the campaign.[2]

The "artful use of surprise" in tactics was among the most important features characterizing infantry actions. In breaching fortifications and in pursuit, in night attacks, and in braving the obstacles of bitter weather and inaccessible terrain, the infantry, adaptable and highly maneuverable, combatted the enemy where he least expected it. Camouflage measures and night assault, in particular, resulted in tactical successes that developed into operational success. Along zones necessitating breaching of enemy fortifications, advance battalions crossed the border at night, taking or blocking enemy defense posts to a depth of 3-5 km. This enabled the main forces to go directly into offensive without air or artillery preparation.[3] Infantry divisions at breach sectors on the First Far Eastern Front were heavily reinforced with tanks and artillery, to an extent as yet unseen in the war: 200-240 guns and mortars and 30-40 tanks and SPA to one km. of breach front line.[4] The combat

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 275. For a recent evaluation of motorized infantry as the "queen of the battlefields," see the interview with Army General I. G. Pavlovsky, Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, *Smena*, No. 2, 1974, pp. 24-27.

[2] "Kampaniia Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil na Dal'nem Vostoke v 1945 g." (The 1945 Far East Campaign of the Soviet Armed Forces), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 8, August 1965, p. 67. Hereafter cited as "Kampaniia...."

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 275-276.

[4] *Ibid.*

formations of infantry divisions and corps consisted of several echelons in these sectors.

Infantry troops were the core of the highly successful advance detachments or shock units that proceeded at the head of the separate and at times isolated axes. The comments by Marshal Zakharov and General Liudnikov, recommending the advance detachments as a feature of Soviet combat formations, are noted elsewhere.[1] Consisting of one to two infantry divisions, one to two tank brigades, and other reinforcement means, such as artillery battalions (self-propelled, anti-tank, and rocket), these advance detachments had high mobility and firepower and were equipped to operate independently.[2] By overcoming or blocking enemy forces, the advance detachments cleared the way for rapid advance by the main infantry troops: on the average 40 km. per day on the Transbaikal Front.[3] It is noted that these formations require thorough preplanning of supplies and orders in advance so as to ensure continued actions in case of communications loss.[4] Moreover, forward reconnoitering units must be prepared to engage in combat to give the main forces of advance detachments time to deploy in combat formation.[5]

The literature offers various practical recommendations.[6] The initial maneuvers to free and hold mountain passes require considerable numbers of troops that need to be specially trained beforehand. Infantry weapons for mountain combat should include long-range automatic rifles and hand grenades with elongated handles to increase throw distance. When breaching fortifications, infantry regiments should have in reserve special forces of automatic rifles and

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[1] See pp. 47 and 68 of this Note.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 276-277; Liudnikov, pp. 50, 78-80, 90, 112, 117; Kazakov, pp. 286-287.

[3] Liudnikov, pp. 60 and 112; Bagramian, p. 273.

[4] *Final*, 1969, pp. 364-365; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 334.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Final*, 1969, pp. 364-365; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 334; *ibid.*, 1966, p. 278; Liudnikov, p. 76.

machine-gunners for cleaning out undetected enemy resistance points behind Soviet lines.

During the campaign, infantry advance was restricted by the prevailing acute shortage of auto transport. On one axis, artillery transport was effectively used to double as infantry transport.[1] The poor cross-country capability of auto transport also slowed down movement.[2]

Border Troops

The campaign demonstrated the potential of border troops as an important element in Soviet offensive capability.

The Far East campaign was *the first time* that Soviet border troops took part in front operations (and were placed under the operational command of Fronts and Armies), carrying out such novel missions as: liquidating enemy border fortification cordons and posts; participating in the pursuit of enemy troops; engaging enemy sabotage and reconnaissance units, and protecting the communications, staffs, important objects, and rears of the field forces.[3]

The experience "proved convincingly" that border groups can "under certain conditions successfully execute active missions of offensive nature." However, since in peacetime it is difficult to define precisely the missions that border troops may be assigned in the beginning phase of war, "it is only by means of all-inclusive peacetime training of border troops that their successful actions in the beginning phase of war can be guaranteed."[4]

In the assessment of Marshal Vasilevskii, the border troops rendered "enormous support" to the regular forces throughout the

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[1] Liudnikov, pp. 60 and 92.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 141.

[3] *Final*, 1969, p. 181.

[4] Colonels V. Platonov and A. Bulatov, "Pogranichnye voiska perekhodiat v nastuplenie" (Border Troops Assume the Offensive), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 8, August 1965, p. 16. Hereafter cited as Platonov and Bulatov.

campaign. He notes their pursuit, security, and counter-intelligence missions and observes, along with *Final*, that their newly formed special detachments used in securing large sectors of the Fronts freed the field troops for deployment on the main operational axes. Vasilevskii indicates the extent of border troop combat operations by claiming that one detachment had cleared out enemy forces in a zone measuring 427 km. in length and 90 km. in depth, while taking 24 population centers, including one town.[1]

On the First Far Eastern Front the border troops performed a crucial mission by mounting the initial sneak attack on Japanese fortifications the night of the offensive.[2] The surprise overrun of the fortifications enabled the main forces to launch their offensive promptly without air or artillery preparation, thus fully exploiting the effect of surprise.[3]

Victory in the Far East notes that "border troops have an essential role in Far East operations."[4] Two-thirds of each border troops unit assigned to an army advanced with the field forces, the rest remaining at the border to combat enemy infiltration attempts.[5] In the occupied areas, border troops jointly with commandant and regulation troops enforced road security and civil order.[6]

It is cautioned that planned mutual support by border troops and ground or naval forces necessitates that arrangements for precise coordination be made in the prewar period.[7]

Under conditions of rigorous secrecy and severe constraints on reconnaissance activities, the border troops rendered "significant assistance" by supplying intelligence, particularly on the locale

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[1] Vasilevskii, 1973, pp. 165-166.

[2] Kazakov, p. 272.

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 103 and 276.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1971, p. 359.

[6] Platonov and Bulatov, pp. 15-16.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

features, roads, and fortifications on enemy territory.[1] Importantly, border troops also served as guides of the first regular forces units crossing the border on the night of the offensive.[2]

Engineering Troops

In addition to the enormous construction tasks required to prepare and conduct the campaign, the engineering troops were also charged with combat and reconnaissance missions. The magnitude of the engineers' tasks was such that large numbers of non-regulation combat engineers (neshtatnye sapery) had to be trained in the prewar preparatory phase.[3] The campaign constituted a novel experience for the Soviet engineering troops: that of engineering support for an offensive conducted in mountainous taiga and arid desert theaters.[4] Moreover, the following engineers' tasks are characterized as unique in world history: supporting the lifting of a Front's forces across the Amur river, the water supply of an entire Front, and staging an offensive campaign across mountains covered with primeval taiga forests.[5]

The crucial role of engineering support in both preparing the theater for the launching of the offensive and in ensuring its development is universally acknowledged:

> It is not an exaggeration to state that in a number of situations, engineering support was the deciding factor

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 130 and 368.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 286. Soviet texts indicate the *sapery* (sappers) as a distinct element of the engineering troops. It would appear that "sappers" are the equivalent of U.S. combat engineers and "engineers" the equivalent of U.S. construction engineers.

[4] Colonel General of Engineers A. F. Khrenov, "Inzhenernye voiska v operatsii po razgromu Kvantunskoi armii Iaponii v Man'chzhurii v avguste 1945 goda," in Lieutenant General of Engineers V. I. Zheleznykh (ed.), *Inzhenernie voiska Sovetskoi Armii v vazhneishikh operatsiiakh Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voiny; sbornik statei*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1958, p. 308. Khrenov was Chief of Engineering Troops on the First Far Eastern Front in 1945. Hereafter cited as Khrenov in Zheleznykh.

[5] *Final*, 1969, p. 127.

> in the successful accomplishment of missions by the Soviet troops.[1]

Engineering support had a "decisive" role in the advance of tank units through mountainous and desert terrain. However, two to three times more engineering troops and means were required than in normal plains conditions:

> Without a doubt, in modern conditions the support of a high-speed operation will require even more significant engineering reinforcement of the troops and the maximal mechanization of all labor-consuming engineering tasks.[2]

Thus, an army corps operating in mountainous taiga should be assigned no less than one engineering brigade to permit the construction of no less than two to three column roads.[3]

Engineers' support in storming permanent fortifications is described as being of "significant interest." The combat engineers' units of the 5th Army on the First Far Eastern Front were organized into 163 obstacle-removing and 106 assault (storm) groups. Shortage of personnel for the obstacle-removing units was solved by co-opting infantry troops trained in assembly areas during the preparatory period. A total of 5,035 men were allocated to the 5th Army as such non-regulation (neshtatnye) combat engineers. The obstacle-removing units engaged in combat together with the engineers assault troops if enemy resistance warranted this.[4]

Combat engineers assault units were also charged with preventing the destruction of railroads by enemy demolition commandoes. The success of a specially trained combat engineer assault brigade in

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[1] *Ibid.* See also *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 286-293, and *ibid.*, 1971, pp. 349-358; Liudnikov, pp. 103-105.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 332.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 287. See also Khrenov in Zheleznykh, pp. 297-301, which includes a schematic rendering of the engineers' assault group formation.

seizing three railroad tunnels on the Chinese Eastern Railroad is offered as an instructive example.[1] On the Transbaikal Front, engineering troops had to set up enemy railroad tracks to move the advancing forces beleaguered by lack of roads and fuel. General Liudnikov notes that his Army did not have special railroad units and that, for the first time in the Great Fatherland War, combat engineers were charged with reinstating rail operations.[2]

Combat engineers assault units were used also for airborne landing missions. Thus, the landing in Harbin consisted of 120 troops of a motorized combat engineers assault brigade charged with the mission of seizing and holding enemy objects and preventing demolition of bridges, bases, and material.[3] Throughout the offensive, engineers' reconnaissance troops were parachuted behind enemy lines in their continuing reconnaissance mission of enemy transport and defenses as well as Soviet logistics opportunities.[4]

The inhospitable terrain, its poverty of construction material and lack of roads presented enormous difficulties to the engineering troops, and particularly so in river assaults.[5] Lack of auto transport caused scouts and combat engineers to lag behind the advancing forces, and hitchhiking on infantry and artillery vehicles had to serve as an expedient solution.[6]

During the preparation phase, the engineering troops constructed 1,390 km. of new and repaired 5,000 km. of existent roads.[7] The problem of water supply in the arid expanses of the Transbaikal Front has rated special attention (see references on p. 51). It was solved

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302; *Final*, 1969, pp. 157-158.

[2] Liudnikov, pp. 98-99, 103-105; Krupchenko, pp. 28-29; Strokov, p. 516.

[3] Lieutenant General I. I. Lisov, *Desantniki* (Airborne Troops), Voenizdat, Moscow, 1968, p. 192. Hereafter cited as Lisov.

[4] Khrenov in Zheleznykh, pp. 294-295.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 304.

[6] Liudnikov, p. 82.

[7] *Final*, 1969, p. 128.

by training and forming special water crews to locate and construct wells, by strict rationing, and also by emergency air transport. On the Transbaikal Front, engineers had to construct thousands of water wells as well as prepare the underground concentration areas for the tanks of the VI Guards Tank Army.[1]

Armored and Mechanized Forces

The role of tank forces in the Far East campaign has received continuing and generous attention. Not the least factor in this distinct preoccupation is the fact that tank forces constitute the main strike force of present-day Soviet Ground Forces.[2] In the 1945 campaign, the massive forward deployment of a tank army on the Transbaikal Front was the factor that determined the success of the entire campaign.[3] Even though the unusual advantages of the situation in which it occurred are acknowledged, the literature focuses on the feat, for it affords an opportunity to stress the role and versatile performance of tank forces throughout the campaign.[4]

Armored and mechanized forces constituted the basis of all main forces groupings in the Manchurian campaign, and it is asserted that their employment proved decisively that the "Far East region (including the Greater Khingans) is accessible to large masses of troops

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[1] Krupchenko, p. 19.

[2] In the current Soviet view, "today as well, tank forces remain the main strike force of the Ground Forces" and are "the most suited for actions under conditions of nuclear arms employment" (General Gusakovskii, Trud, September 8, 1974). On the use of tank forces to seize strategic objectives in conditions of nuclear war, see also Marshal of Tank Troops Babadzhanyan, *Pravda*, September 8, 1974, and Chief Marshal of Armored Troops Rotmistrov, *Vremya i Tanki*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1972.

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 70.

[4] In the first 10 days of the offensive, the VI Guards Tank Army traversed over 800 km., which included crossing the approximate 4,000 feet high Greater Khingans mountain range. Its daily rate of advance averaged 80-100 km. Throughout its march, the VI GTA encountered no significant enemy resistance. The best overview of tank operations and missions on all three Fronts is in the 1971 edition of *Victory in the Far East*, pp. 329-337.

equipped with modern technology." It also proved that the "use of tank units and formations in the first echelon of the front is advantageous under conditions of surprise start of the war and the absence of major groupings of enemy forces and prepared defenses."[1] It was the unusual deployment of the tank forces in the first echelon "at the beginning of the war" that imparted high mobility and rapid penetration in depth to the initial Soviet strike and, on the whole, had a decisive role in ensuring the high advance rates of the offensive.[2] It has to be admitted, and it is, but in passing only, that it was the poor state of Japanese defenses that accounts mainly for the success of the Soviet gambit.[3] This admission is beclouded by assertions that credit for the successful execution of the gambit goes to Soviet acumen in planning and executing the operation, the well-organized supply, and the superior quality of the Soviet equipment.[4]

Choice of a tank army to lead the main effort of an offensive was a first in Soviet military history. The compelling motive for the controversial decision (see footnote on p. 43) was to have a unit on the main axis that would guarantee the fullest exploitation of surprise and the attainment of the results planned on the basis of this surprise.[5] The normal formation placing infantry ahead of tanks was unacceptable because of the slower advance rates of infantry and also because, in this concrete situation where the force had to cross the passes of the Greater Khingans, infantry and especially its associated artillery support would hopelessly congest

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[1]Zakharov, 1969, p. 25; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 329.

[2]*Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 329-330.

[3]Zakharov, 1969, pp. 13 and 25; *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 278; *ibid.*, 1971, p. 337; *Final*, 1969, p. 363; Krupchenko, p. 26.

[4]*Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 279; Krupchenko, p. 30.

[5]Krupchenko, p. 16. See *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 70; Shtemenko, p. 342; *Final*, 1969, p. 109, on the stipulation in Stavka directive that the tank army be placed in the first echelon.

these passes and altogether preclude a rapid advance by tank forces placed behind it.[1]

At the same time, the formation of the tank army was significantly altered for the operation. It was reinforced with two motorized infantry divisions that had served extensively in the Far East, two self-propelled gun brigades, and four separate tank battalions. This increased the army's combat capability and permitted independent operation.[2] These changes add "special meaning" to the experience of the VI Guards Tank Army, because they changed it, in fact, into a mechanized army, as it consisted of 44 battalions of motorized infantry and 25 tank battalions.[3] Liudnikov writes that all tanks of the 39th Army were placed in the first echelon, which was an innovation in operational formation and had no counterpart in the experience on the German Front.[4]

The advantage of tanks is deemed most pronounced in mountainous desert locales, which until then had been regarded as inaccessible to large masses of forces and heavy equipment. Tanks are capable of executing sudden, intensive, and deep encirclement of an enemy force grouping, thus tying down and frustrating enemy forces deployment and cutting his communications. The flanks of a tank force are less vulnerable, which is especially important in the desert.[5]

The decisive role of engineering support is duly noted.[6] The disappointing results attained by the 10th Mechanized Corps on the First Far Eastern Front are attributed to lack of engineering support, and it is counseled that no less than an entire engineers brigade and two to three roads must be provided to corps-size units in similar localities.[7] The problems encountered in equipment maintenance in

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[1] Zakharov, 1969, p. 19; Shtemenko, pp. 335 and 339.

[2] *Final*, 1969, p. 106.

[3] Krupchenko, p. 16; Zakharov, 1969, p. 19.

[4] Liudnikov, p. 50.

[5] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 331.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332, 335.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

the desert and the taiga forests are described in great detail, i.e., how many oil changes were needed daily and how many fascine bundles and other traversing aids were required per tank.[1] Mechanical maintenance of tank units, advancing rapidly through the desert, was a "very complex problem."[2]

The accounts note the limitations on tank use in the First Far Eastern Front Maritime Province sectors because of terrain and enemy fortifications. Massed employment of tanks--even on corps scale--under these conditions would require inordinate engineering and logistics support. Additionally, the maneuvering capability of tank forces could not be fully utilized under the conditions. However, the employment of tank brigades and self-propelled artillery regiments as reinforcements to infantry divisions proved to be very effective.[3] It is concluded that this proved it is feasible to employ heavily equipped units in mountainous taiga terrain.[4] Forward deployment of tank units as battering rams to breach enemy fortified areas and make way for the main forces was particularly successful. Tanks also proved indispensable as trailblazers through the thick taiga forests, where, accompanied by special sapper and engineering units, they created the column roads for the main forces and artillery. A recent description of the "rich and valuable experience [of the tank forces on the First Far Eastern Front] of a forced offensive, breaching fortifications in mountainous taiga forests and crossing rivers" provides considerable detail and notes specifics of the crucial engineering support.[5]

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 156-157; Colonel V. Ezhakov, "Boevoe primenenie tankov v gorno-taezhnoi mestnosti po opytu 1-go Dal'nevostochnogo Fronta" (The Combat Use of Tanks in Mountainous Taiga Forest Locale According to the Experience of the First Far Eastern Front), *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 1, January 1974, p. 79. Hereafter cited as Ezhakov.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 322.

[3] Zakharov, 1969, pp. 19-20.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 276.

[5] Ezhakov, pp. 77-81.

The rapid penetration capability of the tank and mechanized army wedges was augmented by preceding these with powerful highly mobile advance detachments, operating on the average 10 to 50 km. ahead of the main forces and neutralizing enemy resistance. This permitted the tank and mechanized forces in the first echelon to deploy for combat from the march and to develop the offensive in depth.[1] The advance detachment concept is universally endorsed in the literature. Already in 1960, Marshal Zakharov had urged that it not only be studied but also introduced into Soviet military practice.[2] The advance detachments were as large as 1,200 to 1,300 men, and consisted of motorized infantry, artillery, anti-tank, signal and special units, thus having both high mobility and strength.[3] The role of tanks in the advance detachments of the First and Second Far Eastern Fronts, despite the peculiar problems and difficulties of these sectors, is described positively.[4]

A further extension of the advance detachment concept denoted as very instructive is the use of motorcycle reconnoitering units that operated 150 to 200 km. ahead of a tank corps on the Transbaikal Front to seize objectives, such as towns, road interchanges, bridges, and airports. These units received their fuel supplies by air.[5]

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[1] Zakharov, 1960, p. 14; *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 277; Krupchenko, p. 26, notes that the "decisive condition enabling the success of the advance detachments of the tank army, operating up to 100 km. ahead of the main forces, was the absence of organized enemy resistance."

[2] Zakharov, *ibid.* In General Liudnikov's appraisal, advance detachments are a must for every division (Liudnikov, p. 80). For a discussion of advance detachments, see above, p. 47. The following Soviet sources elaborate on the experience: Zakharov, 1960, p. 14; *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 139-145, 276-280; *ibid.*, 1971, pp. 333-335; *Final*, 1969, p. 364; Krupchenko, pp. 26-27; Liudnikov, pp. 50, 78-80, 90, 112.

[3] Liudnikov, p. 80; on p. 112 Liudnikov asserts that "tanks constituted the core of the advance detachments."

[4] Zakharov, 1969, p. 21; *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 276; *ibid.*, 1971, p. 333.

[5] Krupchenko, p. 27.

Soviet dominance of the air space permitted extensive air support of the tank forces, and the experience with close air support is particularly noted as being "of great interest."[1] Air transport came to be relied upon almost exclusively for supply of the VI Guards Tank Army with fuel, ammunition, and even water.[2] Forward deployment of tank units increased reliance on air reconnaissance, which ranged from 50 to 1,000 km. in depth. Air forces also provided assistance with orientation and communications.[3]

Artillery

Despite the massive presence of artillery at the battlelines of the campaign--17,000 guns, mortars, and field rocket mounts were positioned at the Transbaikal and First Far Eastern Fronts--its role has been relatively underplayed in the accounts and analyses of the campaign. This has been indignantly noted by artillery spokesmen, who, however, have been slow to correct the oversight themselves. A major exposition of artillery's role in the campaign appeared only in the second edition of Artillery Marshal K. P. Kazakov's memoirs in 1973.[4] A drily precise evaluation was given in *Victory in the Far East* in 1966, which was expanded in the 1971 edition (pp. 345-349). General Liudnikov's book even contained a supplementary postscript by the Transbaikal Front's Artillery Commander Colonel-General Fomin to correct the "rather modest role" artillery actions occupied in the account.[5]

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[1] Rudenko, p. 427.

[2] *Final*, 1969, pp. 193-194. Reliance on air transport had not been foreseen in the plans and was improvised early in the campaign when lack of passable roads forced abandoning reliance on vehicular transport.

[3] Liudnikov, p. 91, stresses the need to train ground forces' officers in orienting by the stars and the moon because of compass deviations in mountains. They should also receive special topographic training.

[4] Kazakov, pp. 246-295. The first edition, published in 1969, did not include the present chapter on the Far East campaign.

[5] Fomin in Liudnikov, pp. 114-118.

In essence, assessment of the true importance of artillery in the campaign is complicated by the fact that plans for its utilization had to be radically revised in the course of the campaign. The planned and prepared massive artillery support turned out to be unnecessary, when it was decided to launch the offensive with night attacks by commandoes without artillery or air support so as to exploit surprise maximally.[1]

Artillery spokesmen maintain that "of all the service arms, artillery inflicted the greatest losses on the enemy in personnel, not even to mention destruction," and that "it can be said without exaggeration that artillery had the decisive role in the struggle against Japanese fortified areas."[2]

Other accounts, however, list the drawbacks of artillery employment in the Far East theater. Deployment and positioning of artillery required inordinate and time-consuming effort.[3] Because of road conditions and terrain, 10 to 15 days were required to position artillery as against three to four days in normal plains conditions.[4] Effective artillery bombardment of assault targets required prolonged time intervals because of terrain obstructions.[5] Artillery ammunition took up a major share of transport during the campaign: on the First Far Eastern Front, 75 to 85 percent of rail cargos were taken up by artillery materiel.[6] Displacing and reassigning artillery during

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 103, 284; Liudnikov, pp. 56-57. On the First Far Eastern Front, a heavy rainstorm forced cancellation of the planned artillery barrage (Meretskov, pp. 350-351).

[2] Kazakov, pp. 282, 292.

[3] Kazakov, p. 263, meets this argument by noting that the effort was complicated by having to be performed at night and under strictest camouflage to insure surprise.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 347.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 345.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 347. Marshal Kazakov (pp. 260-262) notes the importance of timely stockpiling of artillery ammunition. Ammunition transports for artillery were started in January 1945. At the start of the offensive, the First Far Eastern Front's artillery stocks contained 6 million charges and mines of all calibers (*ibid.*, p. 265).

combat entailed great problems with the timely transport of its materiel.[1]

In the overall assessment, it is possible to employ all types of artillery in the Far East given proper supply and preparation, but the leading role belongs to self-propelled and mobile artillery.[2] Heavy artillery, which was important for breaching fortifications and destroying enemy resistance points, when employed in pursuit lagged behind infantry and tank units.[3] Artillery and its equipment jammed the roads and practically paralyzed the movement of tanks and infantry. Whole artillery units were stranded on the roads because their high fuel consumption quickly exhausted the allocated fuel supplies, which could not be promptly renewed by auto transport because of the poor road conditions.[4]

The lesson is adduced that:

> In modern conditions, in combat theaters serviced by a limited rail network with low carrying capacity, once hostilities have started, the possibilities of using rail transport for troop redeployment, including artillery, become limited to the extreme.
>
> Therefore, during hostilities troop movements will have to be conducted on own power, utilizing all available roads regardless of their condition and quality.[5]

Because of their higher mobility, regimental, battalion, and assault anti-tank artillery proved to be more useful for development of the offensive and pursuit. Specific caliber mortar and howitzer brigades are assessed highly and rated as best suited for the advance detachments with missions to take communications centers and important

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 346.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1966, pp. 285-286.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 284.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 285.

[5] *Ibid.*, 1971, p. 348.

population points.[1] Portable mountain artillery batteries lent effective support to infantry units. The effectiveness of naval artillery in supporting infantry and tank divisions is also noted.[2]

In the Far East, the command organization of artillery during combat is of "exceptional" importance. It must have great operational efficiency and flexibility, especially when operating in the depth of enemy positions and forced to execute fire missions not foreseen in operational plans or displace in the absence of transverse roads.[3] It is noted that during the campaign, centralized artillery command was maintained only up to division level, very seldom at corps level.

Communications Troops

The rapid advance of the forces combined with the rugged terrain and the great distances over which operations unfolded created major difficulties in maintaining communications. Soon after the start of the offensive, cable communications had to be supplemented and often completely replaced by radio vehicles and aircraft, which, however, also encountered considerable logistics problems. It is generally asserted that communications and control were successfully maintained by this combined use of means, but field level accounts indicate serious breakdowns at times due to inadequacy of equipment and transport. Compensatory command arrangements that permitted a high degree of initiative by field unit commanders are acknowledged as having mitigated communications and control difficulties. (See section on "Command and Control," pp. 48-50 above.)

An account by Communications General Kurochkin, which very likely expresses the position of the Signal Corps, highlights the unusual difficulties presented by the Far East theater and the priority

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[1] Artillery spokesmen have pointed out that often the artillery component of advance detachments was so high that these detachments were placed under the command of the artillerymen. Colonel-General of Artillery N. Fomin in Liudnikov, p. 117.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, pp. 347-349.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

attached to the signal service by the Supreme High Command (exemplified, for one, in the high ratio of signal unit assignments). It focuses particularly on the severe demands imposed by rapid advance on the maintenance of cable communications between front commands and field staffs.[1]

Despite acknowledging that radio, aircraft, and other mobile means performed satisfactorily throughout the campaign, Kurochkin appears to regard cable as the basic means of communications.

He recounts the acute anxiety of the Signal Corps about maintaining cable communications between the front staffs and the General Staff, and even the Far East High Command, in case of front staff relocation, and their concern that reliance might be compelled instead on radio and mobile means. He describes particular problems involved in maintaining cable communications on the different fronts, and notes difficulties encountered with the substitute radio, especially mobile radio, means. He approves as a "most instructive case" the use of aircraft to relocate the communications equipment of the Transbaikal Front staff and notes the successful maintenance of front staff communications with airborne landings in enemy rear by means of airlifted radio stations.

Final singles out the communications organization of the Transbaikal Front during the advance as "especially instructive...from the standpoint of modern conditions," and notes that the most important means of communications was radio.[2] The assigned regular radio stations, however, proved inadequate because of the distances involved, and this necessitated emergency detailing of Front radio stations to the armies, while procuring powerful civilian radio stations for use in Front communications. Aircraft was heavily utilized for staff communications:

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[1]Kurochkin, op. cit., p. 81. He notes that on the Transbaikal Front, the planned cable communications system had to be abandoned altogether. The advance rates exceeded the planned ones by two to three times, with Army staffs frequently being relocated daily.

[2]*Final*, 1969, pp. 370-371.

> It is characteristic that 30% of all non-combat sorties of our air force were performed for communications purposes.

General Liudnikov, who commanded the 39th Army on the Transbaikal Front, counsels that the forward relocation of Army staffs should not be made dependent on the availability of cable communications means. In his view, this occasions delays that seriously affect troop command. During rapid advance, the Army-Front link must "more boldly" switch to radio communications.[1] He approves the use of transport aircraft in forwarding communications posts and among his "practical conclusions" notes the wide use of communications aircraft for troop control, especially during the relocation of forward command posts. Liudnikov also recalls the successful utilization of manually operated enemy railroad trolleys to forward communications equipment and offers suggestions for simplifying cable construction work in barren desert terrains.

Victory in the Far East[2] focuses principally on radio as the basic means of communication and troop control during operations, noting that cable means could not be employed because of the steady advance of the forces. Concentration of radio equipment reached densities as high as 40 radio stations to one kilometer of front due to difficulties caused by mountains, rain, and "dead areas." High-power radio stations are needed in mountainous localities, and "under the new conditions" mobile radio stations should be reliably armorplated and of sufficient cross-country mobility to keep up with combat formations.[3] In the rugged Far East theater it is also necessary to echelon radio equipment and pre-plan its relocation.[4]

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[1] Liudnikov, pp. 92, 105-106.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, pp. 294-298.

[3] *Ibid.*, 1971, p. 332.

[4] *Ibid.*, 1966, p. 247. Kurochkin (p. 81) notes that distributing all front and army staff vehicles in three echelons or series, each comprising radio stations of high, medium, and small capacity, was an effective solution for keeping mobile radio means with the advancing army staffs. *Final* (1969, p. 371) observes that correct echeloning of communications means according to the projected rates of advance and command

REAR SERVICE AND SUPPLY

Charged with the logistics of regrouping and deploying the large influx of troops and materiel in the Far East, the rear services had a central role in the very preparation of the campaign. On the whole, they are credited with having performed their "titanic" job adequately, taking into account the fact that the Far East theater presented many unique problems.[1]

A basic difficulty in performing the enormous tasks of the service was inherent in the very fact that this was the first time that the Soviets were to prepare and conduct a major strategic offensive in the Far East and, moreover, that many aspects of the preparations "differed fundamentally" from the experience accumulated in the European theater.[2] The distances involved, the scale of operations, the rugged and undeveloped terrain, the weather, as well as the particular type of decisive, high-speed campaign presented enormous challenges and required new approaches. A distinctive factor was that in the Manchurian campaign all preparations were to be executed before the declaration of war.[3]

Personnel of the rear services represented one-third of all the troops taking part in the campaign, i.e., 500,000 men out of a total of 1,500,000.[4] A special Far East operational group of the Rear

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post relocation was "of great importance." A recent item in *Voennyi vestnik* (Military Herald), No. 11, November 1974, p. 126, reports that the Chief of Communications Troops has approved the method of echeloning or partial forwarding of mobile communications posts, whereby the first echelon advances only a small sub-unit and its equipment to maintain the most essential communications, with the remaining complement arriving in subsequent echelons.

[1] An entire chapter in *Final* describes the tasks of the rear service (1969, Chapter V, pp. 134-175); it is covered at some length in *Victory in the Far East* (1971, pp. 368-372) and also in the service's own history, *Tyl Sovetskoi Armii* (The Rear Service of the Soviet Army), Voenizdat, Moscow, pp. 247-261. Hereafter cited as *Tyl*.

[2] *Final*, 1969, p. 134; *Tyl*, p. 248.

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 74.

[4] *Tyl*, p. 253.

Administration of the Soviet Armed Forces, headed by Deputy Rear Chief Colonel-General Vinogradov, was established early in 1945, and included the representatives of the various central administrations of the Defense Ministry. This body was empowered to make major decisions promptly and on the spot and proved indispensable.[1]

The ability of the rear services to accomplish the necessary transfer and distribution of troops and materiel was a critical factor in setting the start time of the Soviet offensive.[2] Some transfer of supplies and materiel was begun in December 1944, but the bulk of the troops and materiel of four armies, three corps, 13 tank and artillery brigades, and additional units was transported and deployed during May, June and July of 1945.

Important factors in shortening the total time necessary for the preparation of the campaign were the presence of a developed Far East economic resources and production base and the materiel stocks on hand for the regular Far East military forces.[3] Work on improving and expanding the Far East rail capacity had begun while the Soviets were still at war with Germany, but it still fell painfully short of servicing the needs of a major strategic build-up. To meet the contingency that the main rail artery could become inoperational, stockpiling of materiel for the campaign was at levels significantly exceeding customary norms in order to ensure full self-sufficiency of the Fronts.[4]

The campaign experience demonstrated that

> because of the complex physical and geographic conditions of the Far East military theater, the navigational preparation of the area requires significantly higher expenditures of effort and means than in other theaters, where these problems are easier to solve.[5]

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 320; *Final*, 1969, pp. 146-147.

[2] *Final*, 1969, p. 368.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 149.

[5] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 340.

The remoteness of the theater from transport arteries and population points necessitated unique rear arrangements. There was no central rear. The First and Second Far Eastern Fronts did not have their own rears: here, the Transsiberian rail artery was so close to the troops that it was expedient to combine Front and Army rears. At the Transbaikal Front, the rear region was of unusual depth--up to 1,000 km. The rears of the Front's armies ranged from 100-450 km., depending on the distance between the concentration areas and rail spurs. The VI Guards Tank Army had its own rear region.[1]

The campaign provided an important new experience in utilizing combined transport means (rail as well as naval and riverine) for basic supply transport.[2] In Mongolia and in the combat sectors of the Transbaikal Front, lack of railroads caused main reliance to be placed on auto transport.

The literature notes particular shortcomings in rear planning. A serious miscalculation was the locating of Front rears at considerable distance from the troops, when the prevailing road conditions were such as to preclude expeditious delivery of supplies.[3] Additionally, ammunition stocks on hand were too large, particularly on the First Far Eastern Front, where they actually exceeded the capability of the available supply transport means because of poor road conditions.[4]

The assessment of auto transport needs was too low, failing to take into account the higher demands posed by the theater's geographic and climatic conditions. As a result, air transport came to play a decisive role on several axes, especially in supplying the VI Guards Tank Army.

Inadequate estimates of fuel needs were particularly detrimental.

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 147-148.

[2] *Final*, 1969, pp. 149-150. The following breakdown of military transport means during the course of the campaign is provided in *Tyl*, p. 260: auto transport, 80,000 tons; naval, 70,000 tons; river (Sungari), 46,000 tons; and air transport, 4,800 tons.

[3] *Tyl*, p. 254.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 370.

It is noted, however, that a serious constraint on accumulating adequate fuel stocks in the first place was the general shortage of both stationary and mobile tankage.[1] Fuel consumption drastically exceeded the planned allocations because of terrain and high advance rates, while the allocated auto transport became stuck in rain-soaked dirt roads. By the third day of the offensive, the tank army was out of fuel, and delivery by air transport had to be arranged on an emergency basis. Because of lack of appropriate container equipment, tanks had to be refueled directly from aircraft, a method that had to be abandoned as the tanks were tearing up the airstrips. Automobiles had to be resorted to as the intermediary link.[2] Hence, plans for fuel deliveries must be painstaking and, given poor road conditions, provision must be made for fuel and lubricant delivery by transport aircraft.[3]

Transport problems created crises also with the timely delivery of provisions. The barren and undeveloped locales harshly limited reliance on trophy provisions and forage, creating especial problems with bread supply. Bread was not among the staples of the local population, nor was bread-baking equipment readily available.[4] Mess service was encumbered by the constant movement of the troops, the delays in its transport, and also the absence of firewood.[5]

Epidemic diseases among the Manchurian population and other health hazards necessitated large-scale medical preparations. The medical corps also was troubled by lack of transport means. Aircraft proved to be the most efficient means for the evacuation of the wounded.[6]

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[1] *Tyl*, p. 254.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 304.

[4] *Tyl*, pp. 257-258.

[5] Firewood substitutes are discussed in *Tyl*, p. 255.

[6] *Final*, 1969, contains four added pages on the arrangements made for the medical corps, pp. 159-163.

The need for large quantities of camouflage material and tents is noted.[1]

Operational plans envisaged extensive reliance on enemy railroads for troop and supply transports in Manchuria, which turned out to be misplaced because of the poor condition of Manchurian railroads. Delay in concentrating railroad troops in the theater compounded the problem. Road service troops had to be diverted to railroad work when they were critically needed for surface road work.[2] The Fronts had only a token number of railroad brigades, and for manpower, main reliance had to be placed on assistance by the local population.[3] It is noted that advance detachments of railroad troop scouts not only reconnoitered railroad conditions and arranged for local workers, but on occasion also took control of towns before the arrival of the regular Soviet forces.[4]

AIR FORCES AND AIR DEFENSE FORCES (PVO)

Air Forces

Air support of both ground and naval forces was extensive. While admitting that they "completely dominated" the air space by virtue of Japanese lack of air or air defense forces, the Soviets, nevertheless, examine the experience in detail and note its practical lessons in coping with the peculiar terrain, weather, and logistics problems presented by the theater.[5] The literature also highlights the

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[1] *Tyl*, p. 256.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 258.- See footnote on p. 82 above regarding Soviet air force bombing of enemy rail transports.

[3] Colonel-General of Technical Troops P. A. Kabanov, *Stal'nye peregony* (Spans of Steel), Voenizdat, Moscow, 1973, pp. 318-319.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 320-322.

[5] *Final*, 1969, p. 366; Rudenko, p. 429; *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 338. *Ibid.*, p. 340, makes the general observation that: "Experience proved that due to the complex physical and geographic conditions of the Far East combat theater the navigational preparation of the territory requires considerably higher expenditures of efforts and means than in other theaters, where these matters are more easily resolved."

following air missions during pursuit as novel for the Soviet air force at the time:

- o air transport of fuel and lubricants, ammunition, and even water supplies;
- o airborne landings; and
- o orienting ground forces in the desert and mountains.[1]

"The role of air transport is exceptionally great in the Far East military theater," and because of poor road conditions, plans must provide for fuel and lubricant delivery by air transport.[2]

> The experience of quickly mobilizing air forces for solving suddenly arisen tasks of troop supply and airborne landings is very instructive and in many ways retains its significance.[3]

The "interesting" experience with airborne landings showed that

> great opportunities exist for the use of airborne troops in conditions of desert, mountainous desert, and mountainous forest localities containing sizeable zones unoccupied by enemy troops and thus inevitably weak in air defenses.[4]

The expedient role of airborne landings is further underscored by noting that such localities "will render difficult the use of other types of troops because of lack of freedom of maneuver."[5] Until recently, the literature has been consistent in noting that the airborne

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 338-339; *Final*, 1969, pp. 194, 363-364; Rudenko, p. 427. The fullest account of airborne landing operations during the campaign is presented by Lieutenant-General Lisov in his book *Desantniki* (Airborne Troops); see Lisov, pp. 191-198.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 344; *ibid.*, 1966, p. 304.

[3] *Final*, 1966, p. 332.

[4] Zakharov, 1969, p. 22.

[5] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 320.

landing operations took place at the concluding stage of operations *after* the Japanese had already started to capitulate and occasionally was frank to stress the limited scope of the experience, viz., "airborne landings, which were relatively small (from 50 to 400 men), were made primarily at enemy airfields and were possible because of the demoralization of the enemy."[1] More recently, however, the significance of the airborne landing operations is asserted more emphatically and without deference to inhibitory historical evidence:

> The landing of airborne troops in the key administrative-political and economic centers of Manchuria and Korea disorganized enemy troop command and contributed to hastening the capitulation.[2]

The landing parties consisted of ground forces personnel and were executed in support of the approaching advance detachments of the tank forces.[3] It is suggested that landing parties should include military transport officers who can assume control of railroads in enemy territory.[4]

Lastly, among their novel missions the air forces had an "exceptional" role in orienting the tank forces on the Transbaikal Front and in road reconnaissance.[5]

An apparently novel mission that is *not* highlighted as such was the close air support of the advance detachments, both in attacking retreating enemy columns from air and in maintaining communications by means of aircraft.[6]

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[1] Strokov, p. 516. These were air transport landings, not combat parachute drops.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 338.

[3] Ibid.; Rudenko, p. 433; Lisov, pp. 192, 240-241.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 305.

[5] Liudnikov, p. 92.

[6] This is new in the 1971 edition of *Victory in the Far East* (p. 335). It is further noted that this particular troop control and communications mission had serious limitations in mountains because of lack of landing sites. For a discussion of the advance detachments or shock units, see above, p. 47.

Of standard missions, the most important air force tasks at the start of operations were: (1) reconnaissance, and (2) bombardment of enemy defense, supply and command centers, and also rail communications for the purpose of interdicting reserves influx from North China and Korea. The rail bombardment mission would appear to have been in conflict at the time with the simultaneous planning to utilize enemy track for Soviet supply and other transport (see above, p. 79). The somewhat belabored justifications of this bombardment, however, strongly imply a principled recommendation of the railways bombardment mission which is consistent with the reliance of modernized Soviet forces on air and organic means of transport. It is asserted that

> destroying command centers and isolating the combat area from influx of reserves arose out of the concrete military circumstances, and this experience continues to be of timely significance.[1]

Air forces spokesmen note that on the Transbaikal Front bombardment of enemy rail communications was especially important and frustrated Japanese plans for troop regrouping.[2] Air bombardment of the limited rail and road system in the area completely wrecked enemy regrouping and "fundamentally affected the successful development of the operation."[3]

As the offensive unfolded, air effort was concentrated on supporting the mobile units and advance detachments. In locales of mountainous taiga this involved great difficulties with rebasing, orientation, and targeting.[4] Some advance preparations allegedly were made

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[1] *Final*, 1969, p. 366, notes that 13 percent of the air sorties of frontal air forces were on rail bombardment missions.

[2] Rudenko, p. 435. At the same time, this mission is first on their listing of "specific peculiarities" of air missions in the Far East campaign (*ibid.*).

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 342 (this was not noted in the 1966 edition); Zakharov, 1969, p. 22, terms railroad and road bombardment "instructive measures instituted by the commanders" that "deserve attention."

[4] *Final*, 1969, p. 366.

for forward rebasing of the air forces.[1] Landing sites for supply transport to the VI Guards Tank Army were a serious problem. An Air Force account notes that "the flight conditions were very difficult...[In the Greater Khingans] there were no opportunities to find landing sites in case of forced landing."[2] It also notes that because of the lack of airfields and the limited range of attack and fighter craft, the tank army was supported primarily by bomber aircraft. The difficulties presented by the locale in setting up forward airfields were compounded by the shortage of transport aircraft caused by its emergency deployment to resupplying the forward ground forces.[3]

The experience taught that

> on the territory of Manchuria, because of the limited road network and its inevitable congestion, it is expedient to use transport aircraft for transferring to forward airfields air rear units with their fuel, ammunition and supplies. With this consideration in mind, it is necessary to provide a reserve of rear units as well as corresponding quantities of transport aircraft.[4]

The specifics of air support missions differed on each of the Fronts, and it is noted that these would remain applicable for operations conducted in analogous regions.[5] On the Transbaikal Front, air support of the ground forces was on operational scale, the air missions being reconnaissance, interdiction of rail movements, and supply transport. On the Second Far Eastern Front, air provided close tactical support of ground and naval forces. At the First Far Eastern Front, air provided both tactical and operational support: fighter aircraft for tanks and infantry and bombers for missions in the enemy rear.[6]

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[1] Rudenko, p. 427.

[2] *Final*, 1969, p. 194; Rudenko, p. 431.

[3] Rudenko, p. 433.

[4] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 344.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 342-344; Rudenko, pp. 429-433.

Serious oversights were committed in planning air support on the Transbaikal Front: there were no plans for the rebasing of the air army or the interdiction of possible enemy reserves movement up to the Greater Khingan passes.[1]

Once operations had started, the air forces carried out an extensive reconnaissance mission: on the average, 30 percent of daily sorties were for reconnaissance purposes.[2] For lack of craft, a considerable segment of combat aviation was also involved in reconnaissance, and the experience "can be of definite interest."[3]

Air also had an important role in various communications and troop control missions.

The successful secret concentration and deployment of the air forces is given particular attention.

> The experience of regrouping and secretly deploying significant numbers of aircraft along the main axes of the Fronts is of definite interest because these measures remained undiscovered by the enemy.[4]

Before regrouping, the divisions of the 12th Air Army (Transbaikal Front) were dispersed over an area of about one million square kilometers, "i.e., an area larger than Poland, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria combined."[5] These divisions started rebasing to their intermediate airfields about 20 days before the start of operations. The intermediate airfields were located 100-to 200 km. from the border and 200 to 300 km. from the main strike sector. One to two days before the start of operations, the forces were moved to forward airfields, with air attack and fighter units deploying here only immediately before the start of hostilities.

For the purposes of cover, during the preparatory period the radio

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 340.

[2] Rudenko, p. 429.

[3] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 341.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 342.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 341.

communications of the air army continued operating according to the established regimen. Actual command was transmitted via cable and mobile communications means. The compellingly cryptic conclusion drawn is that "these measures attained their purpose and deserve study."[1]

The 9th (First Far Eastern Front) and 10th (Second Far Eastern Front) air armies, which had an already established airfield net along all operational lines, also were regrouped to forward airfields 50 to 100 km (some even 200 km) away from their permanent bases. The same camouflage means were employed here as for the regrouping of the 12th air army. The literature does not elaborate on these but merely affirms that they "deserve attention."[2]

Air Force spokesmen as well underscore the valuable experience gained in implementing secret concentration and regroupings of air divisions, calling particular attention to operational camouflage of basing and the procedures for low-altitude flight formations during relocation to forward airfields.[3]

Additionally, they also provide their listing of particularly interesting aspects of air support "in mountainous and forested localities, of tank units in particular." These include the "wide employment of air transport for troop landings and ferrying materiel and supplies to tank units." Close air support necessitates detailed joint plans, assigning air army operational groups to combined-arms and tank armies and divisions, placing air attack division command points close to the front line and providing joint communications documents, such as coded maps, radio signal tables and mutual positioning signals.[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, 342.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 341-342.

[3] Rudenko, p. 436.

[4] *Ibid.*

Air Defense Forces (PVO)

Japanese lack of air power eliminated the actual necessity of engaging the Soviet air defense forces, but their deployment is recognized nevertheless, on principle, as having been an important and necessary element guaranteeing the strategic viability of the Soviet forces and affording confidence of actions.[1]

The preliminary measures for the campaign included readying both national and theater air defense forces to cover the areas of force concentration and deployment as well as the transport arteries.[2] The Transbaikal, First and Second Far Eastern Fronts' PVO armies included a number of artillery corps and PVO divisions, anti-aircraft regiments, and armored trains equipped with anti-aircraft artillery of medium caliber as well as fighter aircraft; in addition, armies as well as tank and infantry units had their own PVO means.[3] Special forces and means were deployed to cope with possible enemy airborne landings.

NAVAL FORCES

On the eve of the offensive the Pacific Navy was charged with only two major missions: disrupting Japanese naval transports and preventing the Japanese Navy from approaching Soviet shores. Prompted by recollections of the 1904 Russo-Japanese war, Soviet concerns were centered on preventing the Japanese from exploiting their naval superiority to bring forces into Manchuria or else evacuate them to the metropolis.

Naval assault operations had not been included in the original campaign plans and were instituted only following the successful

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 367-368.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 317.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79. Army General P. F. Batitskii (chief ed.), *Voiska protivovozdushnoi oborony strany* (The National Air Defense Forces), Voenizdat, Moscow, 1968, pp. 301-306, notes that in the absence of a Japanese air effort against Soviet objectives, PVO fighter aircraft were deployed to escort Soviet transport aircraft and to reconnaissance missions. Some PVO artillery forces were advanced into Manchuria with the field units.

development of the Soviet ground offensive in Manchuria.[1] In retrospect, the assault landing operations are seen as the most important mission of the Pacific Navy at the time.[2] Yet, because it lacked preparation time and adequate equipment, the Navy's actual performance at the time suffered from poor coordination of ground and naval forces and deficient communications.[3] The Amur Flotilla, however, receives unstinting praise for its extensive support of the ground forces along the Sungari River as the "vanguard force of the Front."[4]

The "unprecedented" extent and reliance during the campaign on naval and riverine supply transport for the ground armies of the Second Far Eastern Front is also noted.[5]

Naval aviation had an active combat role from the start of the

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[1] *Final*, 1969, pp. 86-87 (see p. 44 above); *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 271. An illuminating account of Soviet naval operations during the campaign is provided in Raymond L. Garthoff's article "Soviet Operations in the War with Japan, August 1945," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1966, pp. 50-63.

[2] The Navy was the first to capitalize on its campaign experience and had published several volumes by the late 1950s. See G. M. Gel'fond, *Sovetskii flot v voine s Iaponiei* (Soviet Navy in the War With Japan), Voenizdat, Moscow, 1958; and V. N. Bagrov, *Iuzhno-Sakhalinskaia i Kuril'skaia operatsii, avgust 1945 g.*, Voenizdat, Moscow, 1959. For recent naval accounts of the assault landing operations, see Admiral S. E. Zakharov, et al., *Krasnoznamennyi Tikhookeanskii Flot* (The Red Banner Pacific Fleet), 2d ed., Voenizdat, Moscow, 1973, pp. 142-250; *Boevoi put' Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota* (The Combat Path of the Soviet Navy), 3rd ed., enl., Voenizdat, Moscow, 1974, pp. 457-479; and Captain L. Ol'shtynskii, "Zakhvat voenno-morskikh baz v khode nastupatel'nykh operatsii" (Seizing Naval Bases in the Course of Offensive Operations), *Morskoi sbornik* (*Naval Review*), No. 11, November 1974, pp. 20-26. Strokov, p. 516, stresses the "rich experience" that the landings provided for joint naval and ground forces operations. The 1969 edition of *Final* added to its account the previously overlooked naval landings in North Korean ports (see Chapter VII).

[3] *Final*, 1969, p. 166; *Victory in the Far East*, p. 272.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 273; *Final*, 1969, pp. 364 and 367, commends also the Flotilla's role in ferrying the forces of the Second Far Eastern Front across the Amur.

[5] *Final*, 1969, pp. 149-150. Over 50 percent of all the supplies during the campaign were transported by naval and riverine means (see p. 77 above).

offensive in bombing enemy ports in Korea and interdicting naval transports.[1]

Garrisons of naval infantry were assigned to man new permanent fortifications along the shores of the Sea of Japan.[2]

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[1] *Victory in the Far East*, 1966, p. 271; *Boevoi put' Sovetskogo Voenno-Morskogo Flota*, p. 462.

[2] *Victory in the Far East*, 1971, p. 78.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Recent Soviet military writings indicate that the study of the Far East campaign is but one avenue of a comprehensive effort to analyze the opening campaigns of World War II. The recently published rigorously professional analysis of the German and Japanese invasion operations at the start of World War II, containing assessments of lightning war that run counter to the crassly confident tenor of the Far East campaign literature, in fact, provides the basis for constructing a more realistic model of modern lightning war than the Soviet studies of their "war" against Japan. It would appear that the prior extensive examination of the Far East campaign as a lightning war operation has legitimized--if not compelled--a professional military evaluation of the Axis operations to define both the factors accounting for their success and those determining the effectiveness of Allied and particularly Soviet counterstrategies.

For the Soviets, the particular appeal and legitimacy of the Far East campaign as the prototype of a modern military operation consists in its being a *Soviet* lightning war campaign. Moreover, the intense study of the campaign has occurred during a period of deteriorating relations with the People's Republic of China. In order to establish precisely the true implications of the Soviet preoccupation with the campaign, a thorough analysis of the political and international context in which it has occurred is mandatory. Equally necessary is an analysis that examines how the military concepts advanced in this literature correlate with actual Soviet force postures, their doctrine on strategic reserves, and their doctrine and practice regarding deception. The present work is limited to a content analysis of the Soviet military literature on the campaign and as such does not purport to define its political and strategic context.

For Soviet military doctrine, the meticulous reconstruction of the campaign and the detailed evaluation of all aspects of its preparation and conduct has produced a rich case history for a general model of a modern, single-phase, strategic campaign. Although the

historical prototype was a conventional war--waged, however, with the full spectrum of modern conventional arms--this does not invalidate its utility for a general model. The evidence uncovered in preparing this Note indicates that within the Soviet military establishment there is significant support for the view that the Far East campaign remains a test case of the validity of basic principles of modern warfare and of the potentials of modern military technology.

Clearly, any putative model for a *successful* campaign that is based solely on the Soviet version of the Far East campaign is dangerously misleading, for it does not realistically weigh the unique circumstances that assisted the Soviet victory, i.e., an opponent who was significantly weaker militarily; overwhelming Soviet qualitative superiority over the opponent; combat-experienced and victorious Soviet troops; friendly local population in the invaded territory; and a Soviet military-economic and military-technological advantage that permitted the amassing and deployment of a strike force significantly superior to that of the enemy. It is the awareness of the limitations that these unique advantages confer on the Far East campaign's suitability for a viable general model for the preparation and conduct of a successful lightning campaign that has further led the Soviets to analyze the strategic opening-phase operations of the Germans and the Japanese at the start of World War II.[1]

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[1]The 1974 volume on *The Initial Phase of War*, edited by General Ivanov (since 1968, Chief of the Military Academy of the Soviet General Staff), while presenting the Far East campaign as the flawless Soviet model for the "staging and delivering of a surprise first strike upon opening a new strategic front," also offers a painstaking juxtaposition of the successful outcomes and the fateful limitations of the lightning war operations of German and Japanese forces in World War II. The appearance of this complex work at this particular time is (1) a sign that the subject of strategic lightning war is one of profound concern and controversy within the Soviet military, which is now being aired in the open; and (2) denotes an extension of the Soviet doctrinal effort on the "lessons" of the Far East campaign, whereby additional case histories, i.e., those of German and Japanese Blitzkrieg operations, have been analytically examined for the purposes of more refined modeling of similar modern operations that would include strategic and operational offense as well as defense. A study of this Soviet analysis of the Axis powers' operations is a necessary sequel to the present study.

A model based entirely on the Far East campaign, however, is still recognized, and notably by senior members of the Soviet high command, as being of value for projecting the absolute components that, in certain Soviet military minds, would be part of the conceptual framework underlying any plan of a decisive strategic campaign. Equally, the model discerns problems and possible solutions relevant to individual services and forces in the waging of a major, modern high-speed offensive campaign.

The classic feature of the Manchurian model is that it stipulates the integrated employment of combined arms. It is not structured as an air war, a naval war, or ground forces war. It relies on all of these forces and advocates their mutual support in forms that are adjusted and attuned to meet the concrete circumstances, so that in their totality they form an integrated and responsive, all-purpose military instrument.

LESSONS

The model suggests the following rules for the conduct of a strategic campaign:

- it must aim to paralyze the vital link of the enemy's military capability;
- the force applied in the initial strike must be such as to overwhelm the enemy, and achieving the surprise of the first strike is a crucial factor;
- the danger of pre-emption as well as the attainment of surprise dictate maximum secrecy and cover of preparations;
- forces must be deployed and ready to exploit the initial success for relentless penetration until unconditional surrender is obtained.

These objectives necessitate:

- precise knowledge of enemy capabilities and deployments, his weaknesses as well as his strengths;

- o adequate and specialized forces that guarantee strength and high mobility, and have the capability to operate independently;
- o precise coordination of a multi-axis, interdependent, combined-forces effort that simultaneously affords flexibility and instantaneous adjustability to a rapidly changing situation (a theater high command and headquarters are essential);
- o quick assembly of capability under cover in such a way that (1) in case of pre-emption, it can assume an offensive anyway; (2) in case of detection, it still does not betray the precise intentions.

Deficiencies in meeting any of these objectives generate a host of vulnerabilities:

- o intelligence that fails to discover enemy strengths--this can be countervailed by reserve forces, their mobility, and ready contingency plans for alternate offensive effort;
- o forces can be incapacitated by supply maintenance problems due to (1) logistics and (2) enemy evasion and sabotage--this can be guaranteed against by (1) pre-supplying troops or relying on air transport, and (2) keeping forces, staffs, supplies in compact formations with counter-sabotage units covering the rear;
- o mobility can cause communications break and disrupt control--continued operation can be insured by preparing advance orders, relying on radio and mobile means of communication, especially aircraft, and defining plans re objectives and times in advance;
- o intense build-up, despite cover, will arouse suspicion--its visibility can be minimized by timely stockpiling; regular training maneuvers in the theater; perfected, rapid troop-lift methods that minimize time needed for

concentration and deployment; developing reception facilities in theater before build-up, for example, constructing defenses that double as staging areas; developing border troops as combat forces; and refining cover, camouflage, deception, nighttime operations.

DOUBTS

The literature on the Far East campaign does not examine substantively the range of counteractions available to the opponent for foiling this offensive plan. Significantly, it does note the Soviet concern with possible Japanese resort to bacteriological warfare and the thorough Soviet preparations to meet this contingency. It also indicates that the swift success of the Soviet offensive precluded Japanese use of their "novel" weapon. It can be assumed that "under modern conditions" the possibility that the opponent could resort to nuclear arms would constitute a more seriously constraining factor. Additionally, the literature notes that the Japanese plans to withdraw to deeper defense lines and consolidate until reinforcements arrive permitting counterattacks, were anticipated and foiled by specific Soviet actions. In the event an opponent correctly anticipated the surprise attack and prepared effective defenses without detection, the literature implicitly recommends an overwhelming (and flexible) strategic reserve force as insurance against this contingency. The combination of strength, precision, speed, flexibility, and tactical surprise is deemed to be the guarantee for retaining initiative. The ominous stress on the importance of "resolute aims" for Soviet victory in the truly snap war against Japan may well embody the recommendation that a Soviet campaign, once unleashed, must be prepared to fight for the attainment of its aims with every means available.

A model based on the Far East campaign cannot and *does not* address itself to the contingency of a protracted war. It is predicated on momentum and success. If it fails, the ensuing struggle has to be modeled on the bitter--and costly--battles in the West. The Soviets appear to have made progress also in this phase of the general model.[1]

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[1]General Ivanov's recent volume on *The Initial Phase of War* defines the factors determining the failures and successes of West European and U.S. military strategies in countering the Blitzkrieg operations of the Axis powers. The volume also presents what appears to be a systematic

There is keen awareness that the strategic demands for overwhelming force in an offensive theater not only limit forces elsewhere but may also require their redeployment with commensurate weakening of the defenses on these other lines. Recalling the adamant Soviet rejection of a war with Japan before the conclusion of the war with Germany illustrates this concern.

Having presented the Far East campaign as a major military success and achievement, while downplaying the peculiar (and decisive) circumstances that greatly favored the Soviet forces, the Soviets have of late shown signs of concern that this approach may foster a seductive and fateful delusion. Soviet military spokesmen, in particular, exhibit awareness that in their preoccupation they are treading the razor's edge between a conscientious and thorough effort to extract from this history the valid principles of military art and the danger of succumbing to a premature infatuation with the false promise of quick success. That the ruinous military defeat of Nazi Germany was rooted in precisely such a precipitate and overweening infatuation with the promise of lightning war has recently been restated in pointed language by Marshal Grechko himself.[1]

Some Soviet military minds, while extolling the exemplary value of the Far East campaign, also endeavor simultaneously to inveigh against the "extreme adventurism" of crossing the thin line and validating lightning war.[2] They define the limits in a manner that

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analysis of the essential features of Soviet "active defense" and strategic counter offensives in World War II. Ivanov defines these Soviet strategies and their reliance on ready strategic reserves as effective, though costly means for promptly checking the lightning war strategy of the Germans.

[1] "The German command had such faith in the infallibility of the Blitzkrieg idea that *it had not considered any of the problems of protracted actions* and had not expected to meet with *the nationwide resistance*, which transformed the struggle of Soviet people into a truly patriotic war." Marshal A. Grechko, "The Great Victory and Its Historical Sources," *Problemy mira i sotsializma* (Problems of Peace and Socialism), No. 3, March 1975, translated in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, April 23, 1975, p. R10. Emphasis supplied.

[2] Thus, General Ivanov notes: "*The political and military leaders of these states* [Germany, Japan, Italy] *strove to resolve the contradiction between the far-reaching aims of the war and the limited military-economic potentials of their countries by conducting*

appears to aim at more than mere semantic differentiation, i.e., the lessons are valid only within the framework of accepting the "increased importance of the initial period of war" and as answers to "the trend--objectively manifesting itself in history--toward intensifying military actions in the beginning of war."[1] Yet, such faint admonitions and the hesitations they thereby denote are shaky preventions when contending with the everpresent passions and political pressures to create the substance of the touted "Soviet science of winning."[2] Like the alchemist's stone, "lightning war" beckons a promise of quick victory and glory. The absolutization of the military

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high-speed, 'lightning' wars. This resulted in extreme adventurism in the theory and practice of waging war. The task of military theory was reduced to seeking the 'secret of victory' and to developing 'special' methods of waging war with the aid of which it would be possible to defeat an opponent, who was potentially superior in strength. Primary importance was attached to timely preparation of the country and the armed forces for war at a previously designated time, to surprise of attack, and also to the questions of exacting preparation and conduct of the first operations, which were intended to decide the outcome of the war or, at least, predetermine it." Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 5-6, emphasis supplied.

The same volume also contains the following observation: "The experience of a number of the first campaigns *proved that in the initial period a 'lightning' victory in war can be achieved only against an opponent, who is weak in the military-economic respect, possesses limited territory and at the same time lacks moral and political consolidation as well as the will to fight to the end.* When the war against the aggressor was joined by major states (coalition of states), who had a high military-economic potential, large territory, and, especially important, enormous moral and political potential, then 'lightning' war was a complete failure, even if the aggressor achieved major strategic results in the initial period. However, also for the major states the consequences of the first massed strikes proved to be very serious, and for some, for instance, France, also catastrophic." *Ibid.*, p. 350, emphasis supplied.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

[2] Marshal of the Soviet Union A. Grechko, *Pravda*, February 19, 1975, and *Krasnaia zvezda*, April 19, 1975. On February 20, 1975, Moscow Domestic Service broadcast a greetings message by General Secretary Brezhnev to the troops of the Port Arthur Red Banner guards motorized rifle divisions in the Transbaikal Military District urging them to "assimilate the art of winning, which is advantageous in battles for the motherland." FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, February 21, 1975, p. V2.

values of surprise, crushing first strike, no-pause war, etc., occurring in Soviet analyses of the Manchurian campaign signals that at least some of them may be in danger of succumbing to the siren call to try and test anew the thin line separating realism from folly.

V. A HYPOTHETICAL MODEL

A NOTE OF CAUTION

The following charts present in capsule form explicit statements and recommendations, implicit suggestions, and historical assertions contained in Soviet military writings on the Far East campaign. The material used, let it be said again, is Soviet analyses exclusively, and these confine their discussion to a conventional arms campaign. For the purposes of constructing a model on the basis of the Soviet data, some of the entries under "Lessons" are generalized extrapolations of the more concrete Soviet statements. Thus, in the General Staff "Lessons" column the statement "optimal timing [of attack]: when opponent in midst of major regrouping of forces" is based on Marshal Zakharov's statement of fact: "The Kwantung Army started to regroup its forces at the very time when Soviet forces had already started to take up starting positions for the offensive. This was the most advantageous time for striking. The enemy was caught in disarray."[1] Marshal Zakharov's statement is, of course, corroborated by other Soviet accounts.

Presenting the different statements in the composite form of a hypothetical systematic model is the *author's contrivance*, and not the Soviets'. This is *not* a *Soviet* war plan. It is an illustrative device to present in a logical context the ideas advanced in the Soviet literature by top military commanders and military academicians. That dictates caution, especially since assembled in a model these ideas assume a coherence and a power of suggestion that is vastly more intense than when they are examined separately.

In its near-completeness, the composite structure highlights key aspects of the model that are likely to provoke criticism and challenge. Here, it should be kept in mind that a presumed Soviet model by this date would realistically incorporate additional important constraints, based on their analyses of the Axis powers' operations

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[1] Zakharov, 1960, pp. 14-15.

in World War II. Our attempts to reconstruct a more sophisticated version of the hypothetical model should be accompanied by an analysis of the political and strategic context within which an alleged Soviet model would be unfolding. On their own, the present model as well as a potentially more comprehensive one, can only be taken as intellectual constructs of military thought that are conceivably of equal benefit for a potential aggressor as well as a potential victim of aggression. The actual use to which the model can be put depends on the will of the political authority that controls the military instrument.

Table 1

A HYPOTHETICAL MODEL FOR STRATEGICALLY DECISIVE INITIAL PHASE OF WAR UNDER MODERN CONDITIONS

(This model is limited to and constructed from assertions in Soviet military analyses of their 1945 Far East campaign. As such, it does not include refinements contained in their analyses of Axis' operations and Allied as well as Soviet countermeasures.)

Part 1: General Staff and Theater Command

Command Level	Role/Mission	Problems	Solutions	Criticism	Lessons
General Staff	Campaign Plan: strategy forces main operational planning. Finalize plans with Front commands. Command and coordination of operations as the working body of the Supreme High Command.	Quick victory to bring capitulation =	Superiority and surprise. Multi-front offensive to encircle and cut off enemy main groupings: stun, penetrate in depth, hold initiative. Resolute aims. Strategic target need not be mainland; it must be vital link in enemy military system.	Risk-taking: first echelon deployment of main strike grouping (VI Guards Tank Army) in absence of full intelligence on enemy dispositions. Counter-argument: this was a calculated risk, absolutely necessary for rapid success.	A model for a strategically decisive initial phase of war under modern conditions: Aim: Destroy vital link of enemy military system in shortest possible time. Preconditions: The enemy must be inferior in military capability and morale. The populace on enemy territory needs to be neutral or, preferably, contain friendly elements. Other Soviet fronts must not be under immediate military threat. Design: Time factor is of the essence. Superior strength must be ready and deployed in staging areas at start of offensive. Strategic value of surprise. Multiple separate fronts to encircle and divide enemy force. (Simultaneous) delivery of powerful first strikes to stun and pin down enemy forces, seize strategic initiative. Resolute war aims. Relentless lightning-war development of the offensive to retain strategic initiative. Means: Comprehensive calculation of own and enemy potentials, inc. enemy use of novel arms. Deploying a superior and fully sufficient force in the theater: correct estimates of type and quantity of forces; carefully thought-out astute deployment. Secrecy and cover of preparations: developing defense works to serve as staging areas enables swift deployment of strike forces on border. Massive transfer of specialized armies and equipment. Timely stockpiles of material and supplies to cut preparation time. Theater command for strategic and operational coordination of high-speed, multi-arms offensive. Plan and conduct joint actions of combined arms. Joint actions with allied armed forces: organize single command, joint staffs. Attack when least expected--optimal timing: when opponent in midst of major regrouping of forces. For strategic offensive in the Far East theater (additional considerations): Use of large masses of tanks, aircraft and artillery possible. Absolute necessity of thorough training and education of staffs and troops. Heightened importance of organizational and preparatory phase of operations. Mongolia-Peking axis cuts enemy communications, offers swiftest axis to Yellow Sea.
		Achieving surprise =	Secrecy, deception, thorough intelligence; "do what enemy thinks impossible;" fully exploit weaknesses. Novelty in tactics and use of arms.	Stavka failed to plan active offensive role of Navy; hence, Navy poorly prepared for assault operations.	
		Securing against pre-emption =	Strict secrecy and camouflage; PVO defenses; ready contingency plans for premature offensive if pre-emption attempted.		
		Insufficient capability and command cadre in theater =	Transfer forces, material, commands from other theaters.		
		Distant theater =	Pre-supply; extensive stockpiles.		
		Strategic command of distant, extended combined-arms operations =	Theater Commander-in-Chief and staff.		
		Terrain, enemy fortifications constrain offensive along optimal established front =	Open new strategic front--Transbaikal--as main axis (no enemy fortifications, desert expanse permit unique exploitation of first echelon tank army for massed, rapid offensive).		
Theater Command	Strategic leadership. Coordination of Fronts and forces.	Jurisdiction over Fronts and civilians =	Far East Commander-in-Chief and staff.	Was instituted only during the time of active theater preparations for offensive (implicit criticism). Navy Commander-in-Chief called out to theater only days before launch of offensive to coordinate support with ground forces. Air chief also arrives late (implicit criticism).	Far East CINC or theater HQ institution fully proved itself. Timely dispatch of top rank Rear, Signal Troops commanders, Defense Ministry heads (eventually part of FE CINC HQ) ensured complete preparations, ready supplies. Disguise top commanders to preclude signalling intentions. Campaign proved necessity to create special Rear Administration body in the distant theater. Timely presence of top theater command needed to coordinate joint front and services efforts.
		Ensuring communications with Supreme Command and Fronts =	Thorough advance preparation by Signal Corps.		
		Combined forces operations =	Service chiefs in the theater, subordinated to theater CINC (ambiguous on Navy's subordination, sometimes also on Air Force's).		
		Secrecy =	Use of pseudonyms, disguise by top command in theater until a few days before offensive.		
Fronts and Armies	Operations Planning: force formations, advance rates, field intelligence. Front command assisted General Staff in finalizing plans. Command and control of troops. Preparation of theater. Pre-offensive training of stationed and transferred forces.	Secrecy to insure surprise =	Only 4 people in each Front and Army knew full plans; cover and deception measures.	Poor planning of air support: no air interdiction at Greater Khingan passes; no bombing support for 39th Army; forward air rebasing overlooked. Massive deployment of heavy artillery superfluous, cumbersome. Fuel supply planning deficient. Stricter enforcement of camouflage. Neglect by Transbaikal MD staff in ascertaining road conditions in combat zones had adverse effect on some operations. Road service generally inefficient. Field officers insufficiently trained in topographic orientation. It is noted that results achieved on Second Far Eastern Front exceeded planned indices due to flexibility in extending front operations during course of campaign.	For single-phase Front operations of strategic depth, plan for powerful surprise initial strike, strong mobile units in strike formation, air dominance, rapid, uninterrupted advance. Individualized operational plans for each axis: deploy mobile units according to terrain and enemy defenses air-ground-naval support according to terrain and enemy defenses. Uses and role of different forces (see individual charts). Separate strike axes necessitate provisions for: air reconnaissance (use also combat aircraft) flank protection communication with adjacent units. Initial operations: plan dynamic maneuver of strength and depth (despite lack of tactical coordination and separation of mobile units from infantry)-- coordinate by setting advance rates ahead; deploy compact strike formations; use advance detachments ("new methods of utilizing tank units"); air bombing of control centers and reserve routes; rapidly changing situation requires advance alternate plans and much reserve force; surprise night attack by advance battalions is more effective than air or artillery preparation. Troop control: high reliance on mobile radio (communications means must be echeloned), also aircraft; advance orders to separated units. Supply: correct planning of fuel, its transport crucial; auto transport needs high. Transfers and deployments of forces: place in reorganized fronts; move by organic means; deploy into combat from concentration area if possible; cover and camouflage measures. Far East operations (specific lessons): fully accessible to massed troops with modern technology; plan substantial reserves for mountainous forest fronts; high air transport needs for resupply mission, also vehicles; above-norm fuel and lubricants consumption; water supply of fronts in desert campaigns feasible.
		Varied terrain and defenses =	Individualized plans for each strike axis.		
		Operational missions of strategic depth =	Powerful first strikes, forced depth penetration.		
		Ensuring rapid rates of advance =	Powerful first strike; mobility and strength in first echelon; pre-assign combined-arms advance detachments; by-pass and block fortifications where possible.		
		Troop control during rapid, multi-axis advance =	Rely on radio, also aircraft, rather than cable; issue advance orders.		
		Water =	Rations; assign water crews; use air transport.		
		Fuel (above-norm consumption, transport problems) =	Resorted to air transport; formed provisional units on pooled or trophy fuel.		
		Joint Soviet-Mongol force on flank =	Single (Soviet) top command and joint operational staffs.		

Table 1

A HYPOTHETICAL MODEL FOR STRATEGICALLY DECISIVE INITIAL PHASE OF WAR UNDER MODERN CONDITIONS

Part II: Services, Branches, and Special Forces

Designation	Role	Problems	Lessons
Infantry	Main role.	Supplies and provisions due to rapid advance. Fortification breach in mountain-forest areas: unusual density of tank, gun, artillery support. Lack of auto transport; its poor cross-country capability slowed infantry advance.	Use of tactical surprise, camouflage, night assault. Use of infantry battalions for initial assault fortification breach (see also Border Guards). Use of advance detachments of high mobility and firepower (tanks, artillery, seppers). Supplies in advance for units on independent axes. For mountain pass maneuver need plenty of troops, specially trained beforehand.
Armored and Mechanized Forces	Basis of main strike groupings to provide speed, depth, force. Tanks in first echelon: Blitz Fortification breach Taiga road-blazing.	Fuel consumption and supply. Equipment maintenance and deterioration.	Experience proved that Far East theater, including Greater Khingans, accessible to large masses of troops with modern technology. Tanks have special advantage in mountainous desert. Versatile and novel uses of tank units. Use of advance detachments (shock units). Advance deployment of tanks afforded speed, depth, but necessitated resupplying by air (of fuel, water). this prohibitive in mountains— proper vehicular support needed; intense air reconnaissance; intense engineering support; reinforcement with motorized-infantry, artillery. Fuel supply needs careful pre-planning of high allotments. Officers must be trained in topography, astronomy. Reliance on radio, aircraft communications. Given road limitations, need carefully organize regulation of unit movement.
Engineering Troops	Decisive support role (for tank army especially). Unique tasks: water supply of desert front; road-blazing in taiga; staging area construction in Far East (underground concentration sites for tank army [6th GTA]). Backbone of airborne units landed in enemy rear military and administrative centers. Combat engineers as assault units.	In Far East, need for men, equipment two to three times above norm. Engineers lacked auto transport: scouts, seppers lagged behind troops, resorted to hitchhiking on materiel. Shortage of water crews. First time engineers had to be used for railroad repairs. For assault missions, engineers units beefed up with thousands of sapper non-regulars.	Desert and mountainous forest theaters need 2-3 times standard allocation of engineer support. Modern capability requires heightened engineer support, its tactical mechanization. Water supply of a desert front has not lost its meaning for presentday operations. In the Far East, special attention must be given to road service troops. Assault units and formations of combat engineers. Engineers as component of airborne landing units. Engineering support as decisive factor in mechanized unit operations.
Border Troops	Initial fortifications assault. Pursuit (for first time). Guides of field troops in initial assault. Advance with field forces, cover their rear and communications, counter-reconnaissance, counter-sabotage, commandants. Prevent reconnaissance of enemy border defense. Cover border during campaign.	Coordinating support of field forces. Last-minute beef-up of units with special forces and firepower; intensive training of the mixed units.	In Far East operations, border troops have vital role. In peacetime, border guards must have versatile training, because tasks in the beginning phase of war cannot be foreseen. Assault mission: enemy might attack on border fortifications ensured operational success. Organizating cooperation with ground and naval forces during preparations a most important task. Deployment to defense of large Front sectors freed field forces for primary sector. Mission in border zone: defeat reconnaissance and sabotage; defend rear and communications.
Artillery	Decisive role against fortified areas. Firepower to advance detachments.	Course of operations substantially changed initial plans. Terrain seriously impedes movement: heavy pieces hamper troop movement. High fuel consumption. Ammunition overloads transport facilities. Preparation consumes inordinate effort. Command problem: centralized command only up to division level.	Most useful kinds: for advance detachments—regimental, division, anti-tank, portable artillery, also mortar and howitzer brigades. Naval artillery on FE-II was very effective. Because of regrouping difficulties, large force units operating separately need advance assignment of artillery means. Lack of railroads dictates equipment must be able to move on any road. Careful planning of relocation to avoid road jams. Combat command organization of artillery of exceptional importance in Far East.
Communications Troops	Maintain cable/direct telephone communications of Supreme High Command and General Staff with Fronts, maintain communications in combat theater.	Rapid advance precludes reliance on cable communications for field staffs. Rapid advance obsolesced communications means deployment plans. Mobile communications means (vehicular) lag behind troops; problem with landing sites for communications aircraft. Regular Front radio equipment of insufficient range (distances, mountains).	Rapidly advancing offensive dictates reliance on radio, also aircraft. Need heavy concentrations of radio equipment for mountainous areas; high-powered radio; highly mobile, armored vehicles. Echelon communications equipment posts so they can keep up with advancing troops. Higher allocations of signal units. Communications between airborne landing parties in enemy rear and Front staffs. Air transport of radio stations to enemy rear centers taken by Soviet airborne units.
Rear Service and Supply	Stockpiling. Planning supplies. Resupplying advancing troops.	Great depth of rear regions. Locale precluded Front rear regions for FE-I, II; armies' rear only. Transport throughout campaign. Rear supply could not keep up with forces. Fuel supply mired down, had to use air transport. Camouflage during preparations.	Importance of stockpiling supplies in FE to cut preparation time (tank army minus tanks transferred quickly) and survive communications disruption. Heightened need for mobility because of depth of rear. Fuel supply must be carefully planned (high consumption). Air transport use must be planned ahead. In the Far East, importance of enemy railroads: spare these; air landings should bring in railroad troop officers.
Air Forces	Continuous reconnaissance for rapidly advancing ground forces. Interdiction. Supply transport (first time during combat rely on air transport to resupply first-echelon tank army). Communications. Orienting ground forces. Airborne landings in enemy rear.	Lack of craft, its unsuitability. Diverting transport aircraft to resupply hampered rebasing of airfields. Lacked advance plans and preparations for rebasing to keep up with tank army. Terrain: landing sites in mountains; air-ferrying of airfield materiel. Weather.	In Far East, role of transport aircraft exceptionally great. Plan reserve air force rear units and transport aircraft for rebasing maneuver. Successful use of combat aircraft for reconnaissance. Plan for higher outlays of forces and means than elsewhere for navigational preparation. Regrouping and secret deployment of air forces of definite interest. Exceptional role in orientation and road reconnaissance: train as road scouts.
Air Defense Forces (PVO)	Protect Soviet rear and communications.	Rail line proximity to border.	PVO necessary element of strategic guarantee of Fronts and Navy; enables confidence of actions. Activate national and Front PVO, concentrate fighter aircraft at rail line.
Airborne Landings	Used in conjunction with ground advance units, promptly secured key enemy centers prior to ground forces arrival (take charge of supplies, prevent destruction of materiel).	Weather necessitates careful meteorological intelligence of flight route. Orientation in wilderness expanse.	Experience of thoroughly timely significance: swift resolution of impromptu tasks in deep rear. Should carry railroad troop officers to take control of enemy railroads. Signal Corps lessons re communications through enemy-controlled territory.
Naval Forces	Naval assault landings. Shore defense. Supply and ferrying role. Close support of ground forces.	Lacked timely orders for assault landings; unprepared; lacked craft and equipment. Absence of special landing craft. Kuriles landings—many mishaps.	Amur-Sungari joint effort with ground forces very successful and instructive.

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Appendix A

THEATER AND FIELD COMMANDERS OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES IN THE FAR EAST, AUGUST 1945*

I. HIGH COMMAND OF SOVIET FORCES IN THE FAR EAST

Commander-in-Chief	Marshal of the Soviet Union A. M. Vasilevskii
Military Council Member	Lt.-Gen. I. V. Shikin
Chief of Staff	Col.-Gen. S. P. Ivanov
Chief, Operational Division	Lt.-Gen. M. M. Potapov
Acting Chief, Intelligence	Major General S. M. Chuvyrin
Commander, Artillery	Artillery Marshal M. N. Chistiakov
Commander, Armored and Mechanized Forces	Col.-Gen. of Tank Forces M. D. Solomatin
Commander, Air Forces	Chief Air Marshal A. A. Novikov
Chief, Engineering Forces	Col.-Gen. of Engineers K. S. Nazarov
Chief, Communications Troops	Col.-Gen. of Communications Troops N. D. Psurtsev
Chief, Rear Services	Col.-Gen. V. I. Vinogradov

II. TRANSBAIKAL FRONT

Commander	Marshal of the Soviet Union R. Ia. Malinovsky
Military Council Member	Lt.-Gen. A. N. Tevchenkov
Military Council Member	Major General K. L. Sorokin
Chief of Staff	Army General M. V. Zakharov
Chief, Operational Division	Lt.-Gen. N. O. Pavlovskii
Chief, Intelligence	Major General P. A. Popov
Chief, Political Administration	Lt.-Gen. K. A. Zykov

*Taken from *Final*, 1969, pp. 382-397. The rosters for the Fronts, the Pacific Navy, and the Amur Flotilla have been reproduced only partially.

Commander, Artillery	Col.-Gen. of Artillery N. S. Fomin
Commander, Armored and Mechanized Forces	Col.-Gen. of Tank Forces A. V. Kurkin
Chief, Communications Administration	Col.-Gen. of Communications Troops A. I. Leonov
Chief, Rear Services	Col.-Gen. V. I. Vostrukhov
Commander, 17th Army	Lt.-Gen. A. I. Danilov
Commander, 36th Army	Lt.-Gen. A. A. Luchinskii
Commander, 39th Army	Col.-Gen. I. I. Liudnikov
Commander, 53rd Army	Col.-Gen. I. M. Managarov
Commander, 6th Guards Tank Army	Col.-Gen. of Tank Forces A. G. Kravchenko
Commander, 12th Air Army	Air Marshal S. A. Khudiakov
Commander, Transbaikal PVO Army	Maj.-Gen. of Artillery P. F. Rozhkov
Commander, Mechanized Cavalry Group of Soviet-Mongolian Forces	Col.-Gen. I. A. Pliev

III. FIRST FAR EASTERN FRONT

Commander	Marshal of the Soviet Union K. A. Meretskov
Military Council Member	Col.-Gen. T. F. Shtykov
Military Council Member	Maj.-Gen. K. S. Grushevoi
Chief of Staff	Lt.-Gen. A. N. Krutikov
Chief, Operational Division	Maj.-Gen. V. Ia. Semenov
Chief, Intelligence	Col. Ia. N. Ishchenko
Chief, Political Administration	Maj.-Gen. K. F. Kalashnikov
Commander, Artillery	Col.-Gen. of Artillery G. E. Degtiarev
Commander, Armored and Mechanized Forces	Lt.-Gen. of Tank Forces I. V. Kononov
Chief, Engineering Troops	Col.-Gen. of Engineers A. F. Khrenov
Chief, Communications Administration	Lt.-Gen. of Communications Troops D. M. Dobykin
Chief, Rear Services	Maj.-Gen. I. K. Nikolaev

Commander, 1st Red Banner Army	Col.-Gen. A. P. Beloborodov
Commander, 5th Army	Col.-Gen. N. I. Krylov
Commander, 25th Army	Col.-Gen. I. M. Chistiakov
Commander, 35th Army	Lt.-Gen. N. D. Zakhvataev
Commander, 9th Air Army	Col.-Gen. of Air Force I. M. Sokolov
Commander, Maritime PVO Army	Lt.-Gen. of Artillery A. V. Gerasimov
Commander, Chuguev Operational Group	Maj.-Gen. V. A. Zaitsev

IV. SECOND FAR EASTERN FRONT

Commander	Army General M. A. Purkaev
Military Council Member	Lt.-Gen. D. S. Leonov
Military Council Member	Maj.-Gen. V. N. Kudriavtsev
Chief of Staff	Lt.-Gen. F. I. Shevchenko
Chief, Operational Division	Maj.-Gen. A. K. Kazakovtsev
Chief, Intelligence	Maj.-Gen. N. S. Sorkin
Chief, Political Administration	Maj.-Gen. P. T. Lukashin
Commander, Artillery	Lt.-Gen. of Artillery M. A. Parsegov
Commander, Armored and Mechanized Forces	Maj.-Gen. of Tank Forces N. N. Radkevich
Chief, Engineering Troops	Lt.-Gen. of Engineers M. I. Molev
Chief, Communications Administration	Maj.-Gen. of Communications Troops A. F. Novinitskii
Chief, Rear Services	Lt.-Gen. D. I. Andreev
Commander, 2nd Red Banner Army	Lt.-Gen. of Tank Forces M. F. Terekhin
Commander, 15th Army	Lt.-Gen. S. K. Mamonov
Commander, 16th Army	Maj.-Gen. L. G. Cheremisov
Commander, 10th Air Army	Col.-Gen. of Air Force P. F. Zhigarev
Commander, Amur PVO Army	Maj.-Gen. of Artillery Ia. K. Poliakov
Commander, Kamchatka Defense District	Maj.-Gen. A. R. Gnechko

V. THE PACIFIC NAVY

Commander	Admiral I. S. Iumashev
Military Council Member	Lt.-Gen. of Coastal Service S. E. Zakharov
Military Council Member	Secretary, Maritime Party Kraikom N. M. Pegov
Chief of Staff	Vice-Admiral A. S. Frolov
Chief, Political Administration	Maj.-Gen. of Coastal Service A. A. Murav'ev
Chief, Coastal Defense	Lt.-Gen. S. I. Kabanov
Commander, Air Force	Lt.-Gen. of Air Force P. N. Lemeshko
Commander, PVO	Maj.-Gen. V. V. Suvorov
Chief, Rear Services	Engr. Rear Admiral N. P. Dubrovin
Commander, PVO Corps	Maj.-Gen. A. Z. Dushnin
Commander, North Pacific Fleet	Vice Admiral V. A. Andreev

VI. THE RED BANNER AMUR FLOTILLA

Commander	Rear Admiral N. V. Antonov
Military Council Member	Rear Admiral M. G. Iakovenko
Chief of Staff	Capt. 1st Rank A. M. Gushchin

Appendix B

RANKING OFFICERS OF THE SOVIET GENERAL STAFF AND COMMAND IN 1945 CREDITED WITH MAJOR INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING THE FAR EAST CAMPAIGN

General A. I. Antonov	Chief of the General Staff s. February 1945. "Leading role."
General S. M. Shtemenko	Chief, Operational Division, General Staff. "Leading role."
Marshal A. M. Vasilevskii	Chief of the General Staff until February 1945. "Most active and creative participant in developing the plans for military actions in the Far East" since end of April 1945.
Major General N. A. Lomov	In the Far East as General Staff's Far Eastern division chief until mid-1943; thereafter in the Operational Division of the General Staff. "Central figure."
Lieutenant General F. I. Shevchenko	Mid-1943 assigned to be Chief of Staff, Far Eastern Front; until then Chief, Far Eastern Division of the General Staff.
Marshal K. A. Meretskov	Until March 1945 Commander of the Karelian Front; thereafter turns to planning Far East operations on the First Far Eastern Front. Among his staff, singles out Major General of Rear Services I. K. Nikolaev as key figure.
Marshal R. Ia. Malinovsky	From mid-June 1945 actively involved in developing plans for operations of the main campaign effort as Commander of the Transbaikal Front.
Army General M. V. Zakharov	From mid-June 1945 actively involved in developing plans for operations of the main campaign effort as Chief of Staff of the Transbaikal Front.
Lieutenant General N. O. Pavlovskii	Chief, Operational Division, Transbaikal Front.
General A. V. Khrulev	Chief of Rear Services, Red Army.